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THE PORTFOLIO

AN ARTISTIC PERIODICAL.

EDITED BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON.

With Numerous Illustrations.

LONDON.
SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET.
1873.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING. *By P. G. Hamerton*:—

xiii. Leopold Flameng. 'Francis the First and the Duchess of Étampes,' after Bonington. (p. 1.)—xiv. Karl Bodmer. 'Peacocks.' (p. 17.)—xv. Horatio J. Lucas. 'Le Mans.' (p. 33.)—xvi. F. Laguillermie. 'A Dwarf of Philip IV. of Spain,' after Velasquez. (p. 49.)—xvii. A. Feyen-Perrin. 'A Sailor's Infancy.' (p. 65.)—xviii. M. W. Ridley. 'The Orange Wharf, London Bridge.' (p. 81.)—xix. P. G. Hamerton. 'Crossing the Loch.' (p. 97.)—xx. Alphonse Legros. 'Peasant-Women in the Neighbourhood of Boulogne.' (p. 113.)—xxi. R. S. Chattock. 'When rosy plumelets tuft the larch.' (p. 129.)—xxii. Gustave Greux. 'Going to Labour,' after Troyon. (p. 145.)—xxiii. Maxime Lalanne. 'Weymouth Bay,' after Constable. (p. 161.)—xxiv. —Léon Gaucherel. 'In Venice.' (p. 177.)

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS: CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. *By Sidney Colvin.*

xii. Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806). (p. 2.)—xiii. George Romney (1734–1802). (p. 18.)—xiii. George Romney (*continued*). (p. 34.)—xiv. Henry Fuseli (1731–1825). (p. 50.)—xv. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792). (p. 66.)—xvi. Sir Joshua Reynolds (*continued*). (p. 82.)—xvii. Benjamin West (1738–1820); James Barry (1741–1806). (p. 150.)

THE SYLVAN YEAR: LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS. *By P. G. Hamerton*:—

i. (p. 43.)—ii. (p. 46.)—iii. (p. 60.)—iv. (p. 75.)—v. (p. 79, 97.)—vi. (p. 124.)—vii. (p. 140.)—viii. (p. 156.)—ix. (p. 171.)—x. (p. 188.)

CONSTABLE. *By P. G. Hamerton* . . . 93, 108, 117
THE PRESENT POSITION OF GERMANY IN CONTEMPORARY ART. *By J. Beavington Atkinson* . . . 145, 163, 178
THE THREE CATHEDRALS DEDICATED TO ST. PAUL. *By Basil Champneys.* 104, 121, 137, 155
GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTS. *By Basil Champneys* . . . 8
JACQUEMART'S ETCHINGS FROM PICTURES. *By P. G. Hamerton* . . . 10
OLD HOUSES AT RYE, AND A SUFFOLK VILLAGE. *By R. H. Cave* . . . 24
THE PLEASURE OF THE AMATEUR. *By G. A. Simcox* . . . 25
CANINE GUESTS. *By P. G. Hamerton* . . . 27
MR. MASON'S COLLECTED WORKS. *By G. A. Simcox* . . . 40
THE SLADE PROFESSORSHIP AT CAMBRIDGE. *By the Editor* . . . 48
ROME, BY FRANCIS WEY. *By W. B. Scott* . . . 57
NEAR ELCHE. Etching by *Adolphe Balfourier* . . . 60
PAINTING BY LAMPLIGHT . . . 70
THE STORM, AFTER GEORGE MORLAND . . . 72
SOME ARTISTIC ASPECTS OF LUXURY. *By G. A. Simcox* . . . 72
FLAMENG'S COPY OF THE HUNDRED-GUILDER PRINT. *By the Editor* . . . 87
DAVID COX. *By Basil Champneys* . . . 89
THE BALLAD. Etching by *J. D. Watson* . . . 92
THE FATHER AND BROTHER OF BENJAMIN WEST . . . 104
THE GREEK FACE BEFORE PHIDIAS. *By G. A. Simcox* . . . 114
PORTRAIT OF ANDREA DEL SARTO . . . 120
THE CASTELLANI COLLECTION. *By Fred. W. Burton* . . . 130
M. DE GRAVESANDE'S ETCHINGS. *By the Editor* . . . 135
PORTRAIT OF PENELOPE BOOTHBY . . . 136
PORTRAIT OF LADY DUNCANNON.—G. J. Downman, A.R.A. *By Sidney Colvin* . . . 167
SOME CAUSES OF ARTISTIC FAILURE *By G. A. Simcox* . . . 168
SKETCHES OF ETON . . . 183
ROADS . . . 185

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE

FRANCIS I. AND THE DUCHESS OF ÉTAMPES. Etching by *L. Flameng*, after *Bonington* . . . *Frontispiece.*
READING. Autotype from a Drawing by *Fragonard* . . . 4
HEAD OF A YOUNG GIRL. Etching by *J. Jacquemart*, after *Greuze* . . . 12
PEACOCKS. Etching by *Karl Bodmer* . . . 17
MRS. ANN PARRY. Autotype after *Romney* . . . 20
OLD HOUSES AT RYE. Etching by *R. H. Cave* . . . 24
A SUFFOLK VILLAGE. Etching by *R. H. Cave* . . . 24
LE MANS. Etching by *Horatio J. Lucas* . . . 33
GIRL READING. Autotype after *Romney* . . . 36
WILD GEESE. Etching by *Karl Bodmer* . . . 44
CHESTNUTS. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 44
A DWARF. Etching by *F. Laguillermie*, after *Velasquez* . . . 49
THE WITCHES. Drawing on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell*, after *Fuseli* . . . 52
ROMANS PLAYING AT MORA. Woodcut from a Drawing by *H. Regnault* . . . 59
NEAR ELCHE. Etching by *A. Balfourier* . . . 60
A SAILOR'S INFANCY. Etching by *A. Feyen-Perrin* . . . 65
THE STORM. Drawing on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell*, after *Morland* . . . 72
TWO ETCHINGS. By *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 76
THE ORANGE WHARF, LONDON BRIDGE. Etching by *M. W. Ridley* . . . 81
CORNELIA (LADY COCKBURN AND HER CHILDREN). Drawing on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell*, after *Sir Joshua Reynolds* . . . 84
THE BALLAD. Etching by *J. D. Watson* . . . 92
CROSSING THE LOCH. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 97
THE SHEPHERD. Etching by *Greux*, after *J. Dupré* . . . 100
BEECHES. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 100
THE FATHER AND BROTHER OF BENJAMIN WEST. Drawing on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell*, after *West* . . . 104
PEASANT-WOMEN IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF BOULOGNE. Etching by *A. Legros* . . . 113
PORTRAIT OF ANDREA DEL SARTO. Drawn on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell* . . . 120
PLOUGHS LEFT IN A LANE. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 124
CHESTNUT-TREE BY MOONLIGHT. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 124
'WHEN ROSY PLUMELETS TUFT THE LARCH.' Etching by *R. S. Chattock* 129
THE MOB CAP. Drawn on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell*, after *Sir Joshua Reynolds* . . . 136
THE FOREST. Etching by *G. Greux*, after *Rousseau* . . . 140
ETCHING. By *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 140
GOING TO LABOUR. Etching by *G. Greux*, after *Troyon* . . . 145
GROUP OF LAWGIVERS. Photo-lithograph from the Etching by *Barry* . . . 152
SHEEP IN SPRING WEATHER. Etching by *L. Massard*, after *Troyon* . . . 156
SPRING. Etching by *E. Hedouin*, after *Daubigny* . . . 156
WEYMOUTH BAY. Etching by *M. Lalanne*, from the Picture by *Constable* . . . 161
LADY DUNCANNON. Drawing on Stone by *E. H. Mitchell*, after *Downman* . . . 168
COTTAGES IN A VALLEY. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 172
POACHER CLEANING HIS GUN. Etching by *Amédée Greux*, from a Picture by *A. Roehn* . . . 172
IN VENICE. Etching by *L. Gaucherel* . . . 177
SHEEP'S BRIDGE, ETON. Etching by *R. S. Chattock* . . . 184
GARDENING. Etching by *E. Hedouin* . . . 188
A ROCKY ROAD. Etching by *P. G. Hamerton* . . . 188

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XIII.—LEOPOLD FLAMENG.

Francis the First and the Duchess of Étampes, after Bonington.

WE were glad to begin these examples of modern etching with a portrait of Rembrandt, the great sovereign of the art, but although M. Flameng's plate did ample justice to the illustrious subject, and was inspired, appropriately enough, by reminiscences of Rembrandt's powerful and masculine manner, still it could scarcely convey a correct idea of M. Flameng's own private artistic personality. To-day we publish a plate which is in a much closer sense M. Flameng's expression of himself; indeed, although it has been executed from a picture by Bonington, well known to all diligent students of the Louvre, it is so exactly like the etcher's original works, both in conception and in manner, that the translator, however faithful, occupies nearly the whole of our attention, and makes us forget that the work has not been altogether his own. Readers who have not seen much of this etcher's performance will find in this plate all the qualities that especially belong to him.

All the power and brilliance of such execution as this are dependent upon the right use of very simple means. You have what I have called the free line in the strong markings of the lady's dress, in her hair, in the fur of the King's pelisse, in the cap and sleeve of the Emperor Charles V., and in several minor details, especially the ewer behind the chair, the curtain, the dog, and the carpet. Then you have large spaces of neutral shade above the King's left shoulder, on the Emperor's back, and behind the legs of the two sovereigns. The essential difference between artistic etching of this kind and the vulgar work of some mechanical engraver is, that nothing has been thought of here but the artistic purpose alone. Neither line nor shade is mechanical, neither line nor shade is done for its own sake, as when an engraver makes a thick line and a thin one alternately, or lozenges with dots in the middle. And yet, surely, there is evidence enough here of the range of effect that this art, with all its simplicity, is capable of. Between the intense black of the lady's hair and the dazzling white of her shoulder, what a scale of various shades in the breadth and depth of the composition! Observe, too, the varieties of texture in the materials, all got by the same simple instrument, the point.

The original picture has always been a favourite with a certain school of artists, and M. Flameng wished to etch it as a labour of love. It is a rich little piece of colour, so that it is difficult to resist its charm, and I never could pass its place in the

Louvre without stopping to have a long look at it. Bonington was quite essentially a *painter;* his works have fine colour and great executive ability, but there is usually some awkwardness in the arrangement of form, and often a tasteless drawing. The critical reader will perceive these defects in some portions of the work before him. Bonington was born in England, near Nottingham, in 1801, and he died in London in 1828, but his artistic life from the age of fifteen was entirely passed on the Continent, and so he is classed in the French school.

The scene of the picture is a visit of Francis I. and the Emperor Charles V. to the celebrated Duchess of Étampes. It will be superfluous, for most readers, to add that the French king stands nearest to the lady's chair. There is some awkwardness in the position of his face, so much in profile, but as it happens that the only authentic portrait of Francis I. is in profile, which in his face was strikingly characteristic, subsequent painters have been careful to represent him in that way, to secure a recognisable likeness.

P. G. HAMERTON.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

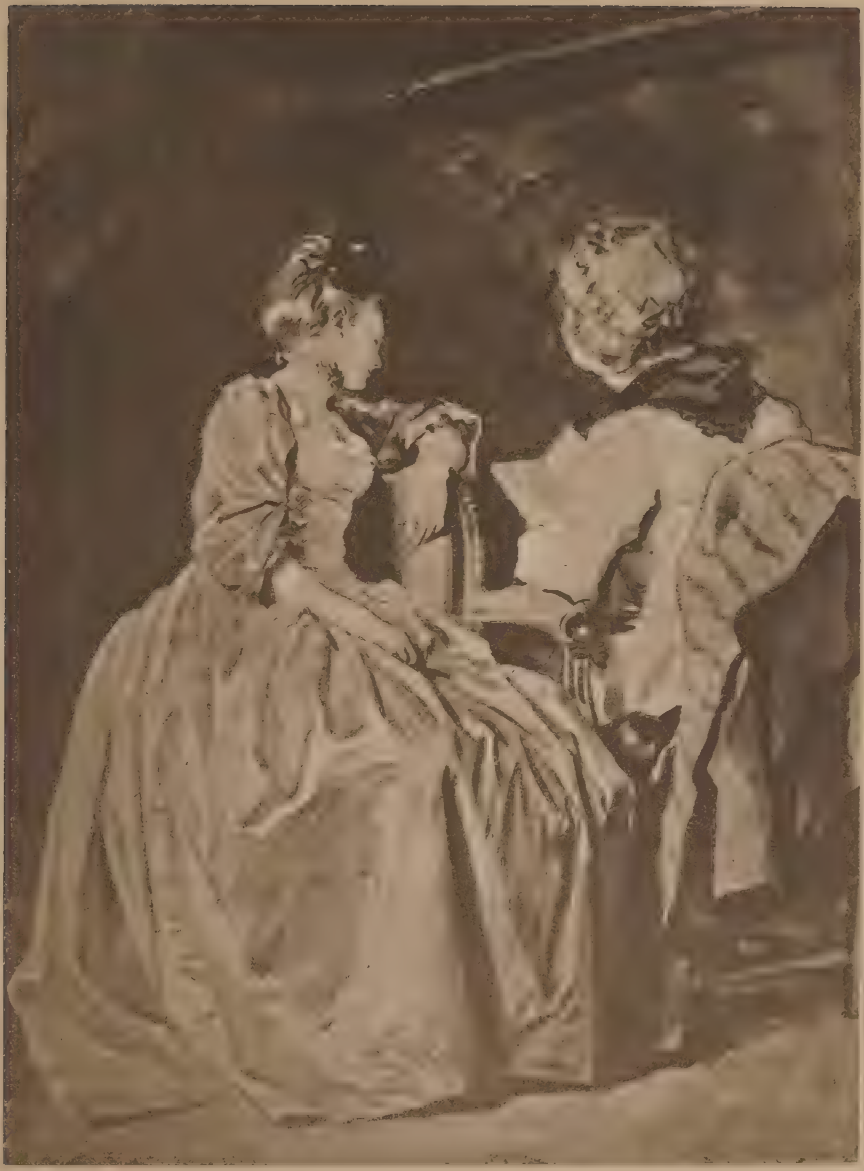
XII.—JEAN-HONORÉ FRAGONARD (1732–1806).

WITHIN five years of the time when our Gainsborough was looking abroad so eagerly upon the fields and tranquil skies of his native lowland, another pair of eyes, with the owner of which we are concerned, were opening upon a world of far other aspect and renown. For whatever the merits of agricultural Suffolk, as a place to be born and live in, and to give pleasure to healthy perceptions, they are not certainly the same merits as those of Lower Provence. Stour and Gipping we may reasonably love well, for their way of wandering through the pleasant poplar meadows, to broaden out, as we presently watched them, into salt open firths where the sail and the seagull begin, and to mingle at last by bar and spit and lighthouse into the inhospitable grey of the German Ocean. But we may not, either in our East Anglian patriotism, or our attachment to old haunts, or our predilection for moderate scenery—we may not say that Stour or Gipping are the same thing as Var or Foux. Var and Foux, Siagnes and Argens, are rivers of Lower Provence. They come running from the mighty spurs of the Cottian Alps, or from the separate cross ridge of the less mighty Esterel. Their stony breadth of bed holds the volume of a torrent in time of storm, in time of drought, of a trickle; they come doubling, sweeping beneath the hills of vine and olive, channeling a deep-soiled champaign—*μάλα βαθυλήϊον*—deep-soiled and turned to the sun, an ancient country of verdure and light, of soft living, music and laughter, of boon produce and caressing air, of fragrant growths and scented shade; for between the terraced vineyards and the watered grazing hollows, among the groves of olive and thickets of orange, all the ground is a garden of mint and myrtle and thyme and rosemary. And here they come flashing, these waters of Provence, or anon lingering, where the champaign widens and the seaward race has pause, to cast up the steadfast sapphire of the southern heaven; they come sweeping out at last, at the level concave between two parted capes of misty purple—the barriers, of sunrise one, of sunset the other—into the enchanted flood of the main Mediterranean, a nether infinitude of sapphire more intense and not less tender than heaven's own.

At the time of which we speak, this climate and province gave nurture to a spirit dowered with something of their own brightness, but destined to give expression to something very different indeed from the old ideals and passions of the soil. Grasse is a rich town of scents and sunshine, and lovely distances of verdure bounded by that Mediterranean blue—one of the richest and most important of the district. It lies inland, a few miles north from Cannes and east from Draguignan. Here Fragonard was born in 1732; and hither he used in his later days to return from time to time. Not his, I have said, to embody anything like the ancient ideas of Provence; not love's ceremonious phases as the troubadours had devised of love; not the pining and death-swoon of a Rudel, nor any ritual of trembling homage and abashed devotion observed by chevalier or minstrel to his dame; not these, but the loves and fancies of a later age and a far easier fashion. Fragonard grew up into the artist who, of all in this light century, carried the lightness to its last expression. He grew up to throw into forms of art the most airy, fugitive, and volatile, the butterfly ideals and butterfly genius of a society in which, if ever, the human soul attained its most literal likeness to that frail and flitting emblem of the ancients. He is the poet—for we shall see that Provence has bred him in some sort really a poet—of the sweets which that butterfly spirit loved to sip, of the giddy graces of an age of unashamedness, of its toying fancies, its dainty glitter, and all the pretty flimsy shows that point, in such an age, to want of conscience, of respect, of force, in what relates to the government of life, to dancing gaiety and sparkle and voluptuous animation in what relates to life's pastime and entertainment.

But it is premature to speak in this way of the qualities of Fragonard's art until we know a little more of his life. He was born, then, at Grasse in Provence, on the 5th April, 1732. He was the son of a merchant, who presently sunk all he had in an unlucky speculation for the establishment of the first fire-engines at Paris. The endeavour to recover something from the ruin brought the disappointed speculator to the capital. Here he was soon fain to seek a living as a draper's book-keeper. And he put out his young son as clerk to a notary. But Jean-Honoré made a sorry lawyer's clerk, and would do nothing but scribble and sketch when he ought to have been engrossing deeds. His employer accordingly recommended that he should be placed with a painter. So his mother carried him to Boucher's studio; but Boucher did not think the boy advanced enough, and would have none of him. Then he was taken to an equally famous master of another mettle, our honest acquaintance Chardin. Chardin kept him to clean his palette and the like, and set him to copy engravings; but here again he did no good; he idled, did not care about his master's kind of work, and was almost given up by Chardin. Though the patient painting of still life and humble interiors had, however, nothing to attract him, the copying of a certain class of Italian and French masters did have something; he used to range about the Paris churches, come home, and imitate their altar-pieces from memory. One day he took heart to go and call afresh on Boucher, and this time was so much improved as to get plenty of encouragement. He was taken into Boucher's studio, and employed upon the great paintings for Gobelins designs, which, as we have seen, formed a considerable part of that master's occupation. In the twentieth year of his age he is encouraged by Boucher to compete for the prize of Rome, and wins it with a picture of *Jeroboam Sacrificing to False Gods.* And so he goes as an Academy pensioner to Italy. At first, Italy and the great masters make him shake his head and feel out of his element. He threatens to be one of the numerous young prizemen from Paris who in this century could make nothing of what Rome had to teach. He does so poorly that Natoire, as the head of the Academy there, is disposed to suspect he must have won the prize by a borrowed piece of work. Natoire, however, is presently undeceived, and finds that the young man has talents and predilections of his own. Fragonard can indeed make nothing of the severe models; Michelangelo and Raphael and their followers do not help him; but he throws himself with delight into the imitation of those painters of the decadence who revelled in melting effects of soft light and chiaroscuro; he acquires all the tricks and more than all the skill of the masters of sweetness and light—nay, put it rather of sugar and glitter, which are not to an equal degree 'the two most precious of things.' Baroccio, the bland imitator of Correggio, is the only painter of the older Roman school whom he can take for model; and Fragonard makes himself another Baroccio for liquidity of outline and fusion of soothing radiance. Lanfranco, the double imitator of Correggio and the Caracci, is another of his examples. He absorbs and assimilates the later Neapolitans, Giordano, and Giordano's disciple Solimeni, who has only been five years dead upon his first arrival in Italy; above all, he steeps himself in the glitter and artifice of Tiepolo, then sixty years old and in the high tide of fame. He also initiates himself in the *sfumato* of Murillo. Having once found himself, he is as busy as a young painter can be, and produces his copies, his studies, his sketches, with amazing volubility. He takes to etching as well as painting. He throws himself into the painting and the etching, both, of Roman scenery, and, in conjunction with Hubert Robert and the Abbé Saint-Non, does landscapes and ruins without end. There is a peculiar luxuriance of touch, as well as a peculiar skill of composition, about his pieces of this class; he has no idea of grandeur in ruins, but he has a considerable idea of their romance sentiment and theatrical picturesqueness. He makes their mask of verdure smile. And he knows wonderfully well where to place his figures of the Roman population for skilful effect among the ruins and the verdure; or sometimes it is not the Roman population of the hour, but a giddy mythological population of nymphs, satyrs, and cupids of his own invention. Among the three or four well-chosen examples of Fragonard which belong to the Hertford collections, and are now exhibited at Bethnal Green, is one of these Roman landscapes, showing among other things how the tapestry blue-green of Boucher's landscape palette had passed into the resources and habits of his pupil. The convention is one better suited for etching than for painting; and the etchings which Fragonard, having learnt the art from Tiepolo, produced at this time in considerable numbers, are real marvels of dainty vivacity and mythologic animation on a minute scale and in feather-light touches. In the middle of all this, the rapid student would every now and then send to a Paris exhibition, as was expected from the pupils of Rome, some solemn academic composition—a Christ washing the feet of the Apostles, or the like. And he would vary his contributions with pieces more in the current of his genius—light scenes of contemporary life, gallantry of the alcove or the drawing-room.

Presently his solemn compositions begin to get noticed for a cunning and brilliancy of light and shade, a fire and spirit in the invention, which was unlike the academic mode of the time. Still more, his light love scenes and interiors are alive and smiling with a richness and lightness of spirit together, which make them as poetical as that class of fancies can ever become. Poetical, I have said, is not improperly the word; for the Greek Anthology is poetry, the poetry of a light, luxurious, animated decadence, which knows how to express its pleasures in forms of exquisite easy grace and finish; and the spirit of Fragonard is just the spirit of an Anthology. No one would think of calling Boucher a poet; he is too heavy-handed, too common and solid in the fleshliness of his profuse conceptions and corrupt ideals; it is the dainty fire, the airiness, the flitting evanescent grace, which make all the difference. These things will not bear being done at all except upon certain terms. They must be hinted with the lightest of hands, and in such a way that the hint lurks smiling out from amid a cloud, an incense, a mystery, of bright pictorial enchantments in light and colour. Fragonard turns the tricks and seductive artifices of light and colour, which he has learnt from those bland Italians of the decadence, to the purposes and expressions for which they are best suited. The bland Italians themselves use them generally for compositions of the old traditional high-art cycles; they invest a never-ending succession of saints and Madonnas and Magdalens, or else of nymphs, goddesses, and Graces, with these enticements of the sugared palette. That is intolerable. But when Fragonard steeps himself in the secrets of their craft, and then applies himself to the embodiment of his own time in its lightest pleasures and flimsiest dreams, he



READING.

[illegible] MECHANICAL AUTOTYPE [illegible]

FRAGONARD

is using an instrument the best fitted for his purpose. He is making of his art the most ethereal efflorescence of its age. And there does not go with his sugared glitter the same nerveless debility, the same exhausted feebleness, as with that of the degenerate Italians. He allies the seductive craft of their palette with a crisp and vigorous drawing, a nimble exactness, which when he chooses he can make as incisive and precise as that of Watteau, or any of the masters who taught themselves by Watteau.

Look at our illustration, from his famous bistre drawing in the Louvre known as *La Lecture ;* it is done with a very little ; the old woman with her back to us, the young woman in averted profile, are brought out from the background of bistre with a magic lightness of touch ; yet how thorough it is, how free from exhaustion or debility, how crisp and brilliant. The folds of the young girl's dress are perfectly studied and understood, and expressed with a perfect subtlety ; what can be better than the outline of her figure, more simple and delicate than the poise of her throat and dainty listening head, more cunningly indicated than the adjustment of her hair and its black bow, more finely felt than the passive resting of her pretty arms, one upon her lap and the other upon the chair-back ? And then, with all that delicacy, the entire boldness and largeness of style, the vigorous angles and planes of drawing, the entire absence of all that is mere smoothness and polish. This is one of the best drawings to show the kind of master which, when he chooses to be sober and well behaved, this giddy sort of eighteenth-century Frenchman can really be. England could produce nothing simpler, wholesomer in feeling, and certainly nothing at the same time so sparkling and so strong in design. What is singular, too, is that, in the Englishmen's special art and special glory of designing children as they are, with all their natural loveliness about them, this Fragonard is more nearly their rival than any other foreigner. In trying to speak, in another place, of the way in which children were handled by eighteenth-century art, I have named Chardin and Fragonard as the two foreigners of the time who might occasionally be mentioned in the same breath with our own masters. Fragonard fills endless pictures and drawings with nothing but children and their play ; and then he is delightful by the tender subtlety of his observation, as well as by the expressive fire and lightness of his touch. But what he loves best is to make little miniature portraits of particular children ; and these of his are about the most adorable miniatures in existence—the freshest, brightest, and airiest, the most free from any look of labour and dryness. Hear M. de Goncourt on the subject of Fragonard's compositions of children in painting and drawing : (only that M. de Goncourt's vocabulary is one of the most untranslatable in the world) :—

> 'Children !—tiny brats in short breeches, spinning and dancing in the sun, swift and somewhat naked like baby gods ; children with their little coaxing fingers straying about a mother's face or bosom, children with their buds of mouths, children in their playmateship with dogs and donkeys, riding on their backs, hanging on their necks ; here one in its great little night-shirt, white all over, on the top of a pyramid of others busy watching while the fritters fry ; there one curled and flaxen, with a doll in its arms, mounted on a sideboard and preaching like a little wax St. John. These and suchlike dear little people fill the scenes of Fragonard with a light and babble of Paradise. When they are quite too tiny, the little beings, he puts the life in them to sleep amid a garden of flowers, the mother loving and hanging over, in a cradle which looks as if it had grown there with the roses that shed their petals above. A little bigger, he shows us one mounted upon an orange tub, having been swaddled up by maternal solicitude in wraps from which nothing except the small face comes out. Or else, he sets them climbing like an ascension of angels about the mother's knees. It seems as if the draughtsman had felt a father's joy in grouping all these *fanfans*, in setting them to play together and tumble topsy-turvy,—and as if one could see him as it were dandling his composition on his knees. How exactly of their age he draws them, alive, jolly, rosy, wild, all these morsels, these buttons of boys, these pretty scraps of girls, these budding women-shoots ! They are not the same children as Chardin paints ; for Chardin's are already little tradespeople, demure and serious, who have grown up in the gloom of small-paned chambers, under the earnest lessons of a straitened and severe life. No, they are in truth a family of Fragonard's own, the offspring of his genius, these tiny demons of freedom, blossom, and radiance, showing the knees of cupid between their breeches and rolled socks, spoiled children of happiness and the country, of love and nature.——

Well, well, we are coming to touches in which this felicitous critic shows that he is a Frenchman after all, and that the artist whose work enchants him was so too. And no doubt the charming passage above cited, or rather travestied, leaves an impression of something not just the same as the English simplicity and purity in these things. M. de Goncourt has seen very many more of Fragonard's compositions than I have, and the impression which he gives is probably the right one on the whole; but what I had in my mind particularly were one or two pieces corresponding to his phrase of 'climbing in an ascension of angels about the mother's knee,' and another which he elsewhere calls 'the great and magnificent piece of a woman distributing to a lot of children some bread which she draws from a cupboard.' And these certainly are as sweet and innocent and true in feeling, as grave and tranquil in their style, as anything of the kind which has been done.

For a Frenchman, what is pretty is pretty and that is enough, without regard to its innocence or vice; so that there is not the same contrast for him as for us between work in which sights of innocency and work to which sights of viciousness give the motive. Therefore it is not in the equal skill which Fragonard shows from either of these starting-points that we must recognise the chief mark of his range or versatility. His range, his versatility, make themselves more truly felt by passing from all these light pieces of pretty dainty radiance, whether in the children's garden or in a courtesan's chamber, and whether flung on to canvas with half-a-dozen nimble twirls of a brush steeped in sunlight, or rubbed on to moist paper in a warm cloud of bistre—by passing from all these, and over the whole class of his landscape work besides, to his serious academical work on a large scale. It is very seldom that the power of radiant suggestion and minute felicity on the scale of a few square inches goes together with the power of able composition and adequate execution on a vast scale. In Fragonard the two powers did go together. While his light minute work was the finest of a time which excelled in that, his grave and large work was—not what we would best like it to be, certainly, but as capable, and more vigorous and alive, than any other that was done by his contemporaries. The famous picture of *Coresus and Callirhoë*, twelve feet by nine and more, is the great example. It was executed as a design for the Beauvais establishment, and created a prodigious enthusiasm at the time of its exhibition. Diderot adopts one of his favourite kind of literary artifices for its description. As, in the case of Vernet, Diderot likes to make believe he is describing travels of his own, and real scenes which he has enjoyed, to come round at last to the revelation that what he has been describing all along was only pictures by Vernet; so, in this case, he begins by making believe that after reading some Plato he fell asleep and had a dream. That he dreamed he was in a cave like the famous cave of Plato's image; that upon its curtain was thrown, after the manner of a magic lantern, the vision of a certain scene, which he describes in his usual moving and dramatic style. And that scene his interlocutor, Grimm, is presently made to recognise as the picture of *Coresus and Callirhoë* by Fragonard, which he had lately been admiring at the Salon. Diderot's purpose in this device, as one seems to see, is a double one—the literary purpose of giving himself an opening for his gift of dramatic narrative, in describing a vision passing under his own eyes; and the critical purpose of pointing out, in this indirect way, that the weak point of the picture was precisely its visionary—its theatrical—conception and arrangement. Diderot is too long for us: but listen again to M. de Goncourt, somewhat condensed. The impression which he gives is the right one, of an able and impetuous piece of theatrical unreality, conducted by a hand which is absolute master of all tricks of illumination and colour:—

> 'The scene passes between two columns of polished and almost iridescent marble, above the dull purple of a gold-fringed carpet, which falls in front over two steps. Upon the carpet is relieved a sacrificial bowl of copper, near an urn of black marble which is half covered with the whiteness of a cloth. Another column cuts in two a great smoking bronze candelabrum with bull's-head ornaments. A young priest, who has dropped his incense-burner in terror, kneels clinging to the pedestal of the candelabrum. Beside him stands the high priest Coresus, crowned with ivy, and closely draped in

garments of sacerdotal white; he is beardless, an Adonis, as it were the sexless shadow of a man. With one hand he plunges the knife into his breast; with the other he seems to cast away his life towards heaven, while the agony of self-sought death passes over his features. Opposite the dying priest is the victim, half-dead with thinking that she was about to die. Her head has fallen upon her shoulder; she has sunk before the smoking altar, her glance is bewildered, she cannot control her limbs, her arms lie all along, she is motionless, scarcely breathing, pale beneath her wreath of pallid roses. Between her and the altar, a young priest leans forward in horror-struck curiosity. Another, who was holding the basin prepared to receive her blood, remains petrified and gaping. In the rear, grey-headed priests are showing each other the sight of horror. Above them, the smoke of the temple, the flames, the perfumes, the altar-vapours, go up to mingle with the clouds, with a night of portent and of hell, with the writhen and rolling sky, the sombre-glowing whirlwind amid which a Genius with torch and dagger drags off Love in the wake of his dismal flight. Look from this upper shadow to the shadow at the bottom of the picture; two women writhe there in terror, hiding their faces; a little boy buries himself between their knees; and a sunbeam, grazing the arm of one of the women, touches the hair and rosy hands of the child——A veritable miracle of opera effect! And yet the illusion, the stage show, since such it is, is a magnificent one. What ardour and splendour, what milky light in all these priestly draperies of white, what virgin radiance flooding the middle of the scene, dying about the limbs of faint Callirhoë; what fumes, what vapours, what incense, what rolling-in of night upon day; what volleys and reverberations of sunlight amid the magic gloom and horror of ominousness!'

This picture brings us back to what we have again neglected, the facts of Fragonard's career. Indeed there are few enough facts to tell about it. His personality is written almost exclusively on his canvases and scraps of smiling and sparkling paper. Indeed he used literally to make his memoranda and write his notes to his friends in laughing little sketches and emblems rather than in written words. He had two signatures for his work, 'Fragonard' properly spelt for his solemn kind, 'Frago' in gay diminutive for his light things and sketches.

This great picture of *Coresus and Callirhoë* was exhibited in the Salon of 1765, and won him instant admission, by acclamation, to the ranks of the Academy. He was then thirty-three. In five or six years more, being settled at Paris, he married a Provence countrywoman of his own; a plain-visaged Mdlle. Gérard from Grasse, who had come to Paris to learn to help in a distillery business with which her family was connected. But she liked painting better than distillery; and was introduced, for a teacher, to her successful fellow-townsman; who presently married her, to their mutual contentment thereafter. Mdlle. Gérard had a sister younger than herself, who was presently sent for to join the household, and under the tuition of her brother-in-law became a very distinguished draughtswoman and engraver. The household passed a peaceable and prosperous time, with nothing to tell of—a voyage to Italy once—and a flourishing professional activity. Then comes the political revolution, with the generous ardours and hopes of its commencement; and Madame Fragonard is one of the company of artists' wives who go to the National Assembly to offer their ornaments and trinkets to the fatherland. From the revolution in art, Fragonard, though the new style is so much the enemy of his own, does not suffer much at first. For David, its leader, is his friend, and has him appointed to various official posts in connexion with the Fine Arts under the Republic. Fragonard even attempts, with his unaccustomed and now ageing fingers, some severe antiquarianisms in the new mode. By-and-by, however, the growing generation does thrust him aside and leave him in the cold. He loses office and money, and spends a neglected, and what in most men would have been a dejected, age. Being what he is, however, he keeps his bright spirits to the end; and, coming of a long-lived stock, dies at last at seventy-four (August 22, 1806) from congestion of the brain, brought on, it is said, by eating an ice when he was overheated in the Champs Elysées.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTS.

A WRITER in the 'Quarterly Review' has, during the year just closed, been good enough to teach us all, with a confidence which the conscious mastery of his subject alone begets, what we ought to think about some of the most interesting architectural questions of the day. That venerable periodical appears, under the influence of its boisterous contributor, to have undergone a shock which might be supposed to be not a little trying to a mature and staid temperament, and to have blossomed simultaneously into illustrations and a somewhat rabid style of composition. Having, too, surprised us once by a *tour de force* in sustained invective, the writer has taken pains to convince us, by a second similar performance, that the splenetic vigour, which to an average mortal would be an exceptional movement, is in his case by no means limited in quantity or to special occasions, but that he is prepared with an apparently exhaustless supply of the same commodity against any person and on any topic within the limits of the wide subject of architecture. If the repetition of abusive writing, like the repetition of cabbage, has proved deadly to the effect he at first produced, leaving an impression of monotony rather than of force, the writer may nevertheless retain the credit of having given a special impetus to two questions of immediate and present interest.

The first essay especially, which appeared in the April number under the title of 'The State of English Architecture,' forms a useful starting-point for the discussion of a most interesting question; namely, In what essential points does the architect of the present day differ from the architect of the pre-Renaissance period, and how far must the difference influence the character of contemporary Gothic work? I will not attempt to repeat at length the theory of the reviewer, which is sufficiently well known from other sources, especially from Mr. Fergusson's works, to whom in great measure it owes its origin. Stated very briefly, the theory is that the architect, as he now is, is a creation of the Renaissance, before which period he existed only as a superior workman, personally engaged on and in the work, organising, supervising, to some extent originating, but exercising his influence by direct and personal means. The architect of the Renaissance, and of subsequent periods, is, on the other hand, an originator of drawings rather than of work—an absentee, and, worse than all, a 'gentleman.'

This theory undoubtedly presents one phase of a very wide and essential difference in art-creation past and present; which difference, if it is to be exhaustively discussed, should be limited neither to a special period of time nor to an individual art, and which might be defined as the difference between Consciousness and Unconsciousness. Very few would venture to deny that much of the most valuable art of past time has been produced without theory and without conscious effort; that theory and effort are generally detrimental, if not fatal, to art-creation; and that the character of thought, as well as the method of practice of our own time, makes unconsciousness in the practice of architecture and the kindred arts almost an impossibility. There is much truth in the theory which attributes this change in the position of an artist towards his work to the Renaissance. Before that movement the development of architecture was so spontaneous and even, that it has practically left no history except in the monuments it produced; and, indeed, the art is not less happy than the nation of whom this can be said. To the originator of a work in the Middle Ages, no doubt ever occurred as to the style he should adopt or the architect he should employ. The style, though varying without pause or intermission, was nevertheless always, at any one time, established without rival and universal without exception. If a building was to be altered or enlarged, so supreme was the current style, that the original work seldom won for itself so much consideration as would lead to a sympathetic modification of the added features. The organisation of the guild or of the staff of workmen was complete and perfect.

The workman, with an intimate knowledge resulting from the prevalence of the style, and with a ready invention which flourished under the favourable conditions of freedom of imagination, could carry out into perfect detail indications of the slightest kind; and the work of the master must have been limited to the general disposition of the whole, and the supervision of its execution, under circumstances which ensured every supplemental aid and every favourable condition. Instead of being the work of one, each building was the work of many, every one an artist in his special sphere; and the several works were developed as harmoniously and spontaneously as the several styles by the co-operation of the inventive thought and ready handicraft of the various grades of workmen.

With the Renaissance a new era of practice began. Then, the connexion with the immediate past being severed, was first inaugurated a conscious and scholarly study of remote models; then, for the first time, was practice in the arts founded on principles and laws derived from analysis and research. As a consequence of the interruption of past organisation, the chief originator and controller of the work was often one unconnected with, and inexperienced in, the practice of building; often, as every one knows, some celebrated painter was considered in his unrivalled mastery of the general laws of design to possess the best qualifications for dealing with this special art. From this period, in short, the building art had been placed on a new basis, that of conscious taste and study and the elaborate invention of individuals.

Thus much of the theory under discussion is unquestionably true. The Renaissance undoubtedly inaugurated an essential change in the spirit and method of the building art, which has on the whole survived to the present day, and the fact that the styles of the Middle Ages are now the models for a very large proportion of contemporary design cannot be expected to reverse the established method; rather must the styles be modified to suit the new conditions. Thus, assenting to his theory historically, I am disposed to take an entirely opposite view to the reviewer's of the practical question for the present, and to believe that if Gothic architecture is to be altogether or in part the style of the future, we must, instead of spending our strength in futile efforts to resuscitate the conditions of an art organisation of which no trace survives, be content to limit and develope the style according to the prevalent methods of the post-Renaissance era. And this I believe to have been done in the most successful Gothic work of our own time.

Meanwhile it is worth remarking, in the light of the present discussion, that some recent styles of architecture have considerable claims to practical consideration. Notwithstanding that the Renaissance supplanted a style universal and vernacular by one originally derived from special study, the influences which must inevitably modify a style so derived, and at the same time be the crucial and ultimate test of its vitality, the necessity that it should become adapted to varied requirements and so be made capable of currency, did, since the Renaissance, produce at least one style which became almost as universal and vernacular as the styles of the Middle Ages. No one who has studied the English domestic art of the eighteenth century will deny that it has at least these claims to recognition;—a character so pronounced and so universally adaptable as to be equally recognisable in a palace and in a cottage, in a jewel or in a drapery; a vitality such that its debased traditions are, on the whole, more satisfactory than aught which contemporary invention has evolved; and the note of spontaneity, which marks it as a real and living form of art. So far, then, from Gothic being the last of the vernacular styles, we have, almost surviving to our own time, one which rivals in this respect those of the Middle Ages, and which, from its proximity to our own time, fulfils far more thoroughly the practical requirements of contemporary life. Whether the inherent beauty of the Gothic styles is such as can survive the mutilation and distortion necessary to adapt it to modern uses, is a question for individual taste. In any case the nearness to us of the domestic style of the eighteenth century, the fact that it grew and flourished under conditions of design far less dissimilar to those of our own time, and that it readily lends itself to modern requirements, give it a strong title to recognition. With ecclesiastical architecture the case is different. The survival of a very large number of mediæval churches with their constructional features and general character unchanged; the fact that in church architecture the English Renaissance has, on the whole, been a failure, and is associated in many minds with a dull and lifeless form of worship; the very important attempt that has been made to link the formulas of the present to those of the Middle Ages;—these, and many other considerations, point to Gothic as the ecclesiastical style of the present and the immediate future. But whether it be adopted for domestic or ecclesiastical work or both, it is certain that the changed conditions of the present time have modified, and must continue to modify, many important qualities of the style. It only remains to indicate of what nature these modifications might be expected to be.

In the first place, the modern architect, unsupported in his work by the intelligent and sympathetic aid of workmen, must be prepared to dispense in great measure with those elements of effect, such as decorative sculpture, which depend for their meaning on the ready invention of the workman. Even where energy and skill have succeeded in producing detail practically equivalent to that of the Middle Ages, the sense, or rather knowledge, of the elaborate efforts from which it results must always detract from its effect. For the same reason, those playful and apparently fortuitous effects of composition or proportion which are so often found delightful in old buildings, can scarcely be unreservedly reproduced without some slight sense of affectation. The only compensation for the loss of these elements of effect must be sought in the fullest and most careful study of others, which belong as thoroughly to the present as the past, and for the development of which current methods of design afford special opportunities. A full knowledge and a masterly use of proportion as a principle of beauty, such as is only exceptionally discernible in mediæval buildings, and might seem overstudied in an old work; an absolute observance of uniformity and rhythm, often less charming than the effects of a chance combination; these are the elements on which the greatest works of our own time have relied and must rely; and the greatest success may be expected to be his who can best detach himself from a hopeless pursuit after the irrecoverable, and can therefore throw his entire weight into those effects which depend on universal laws of beauty, and survive all changes of style.

BASIL CHAMPNEYS.

JACQUEMART'S ETCHINGS FROM PICTURES.*

THE brilliant revival of etching which has taken place all over Europe during the last few years has slightly disappointed me in one particular. Three or four of the very best artists in etching are devoting the greater part of their time, if not just now all their time, to the copyism or interpretation of pictures painted by other men. A great deal, no doubt, may be said in favour of this way of employing their talents. Notwithstanding the old prejudice against etching, that it is a scratchy, meagre, imperfect art, every educated critic is well aware that whatever of a picture can be rendered in black-and-white can be rendered effectively in etching. There is certainly nothing in the art which opposes itself to the interpretation of painting. A master-etcher can get tone and modelling at will; he can follow the accents of the brush with corresponding accents of the line; he has an almost infinite variety of executive resources at command, from the softness of mezzotint to the severity of line-engraving, combined with a liberty that answers to the liberty of the boldest brush-work. Certainly no art can be nearer to painting, alike in sympathy and in power, and still the copying of pictures rather disquiets me. I had hoped that etching would hold its own independent place, doing work as wonderful as this, yet all its own, from the conception of the thought to its finally complete expression. Being especially an *artist's art*, etching seemed fitted rather for the inventor than the copyist; and indeed, until recently, copyists have very rarely used it, since the burin suited both their own temper and the taste of their public better.

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* The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. A series of etchings by M. Jules Jacquemart. London: published by Paul and Dominic Colnaghi and Co., Pall Mall East.

However, this shade of regret having been duly recorded, there remains to a lover of this grand old art a legitimate feeling of triumph. It may be observed that etching is hardly ever mentioned by ignorant reviewers without some assertion of its impotence in one direction or another. One reviewer says it utterly shuts out light and shade; another, that it cannot model; a third, that it cannot render texture, and is wanting in variety of treatment: the remarkable thing being that these reviewers always happen to hit upon some quality which the great etchers have attained in the most splendid perfection. To all such objectors, M. Jacquemart's etchings from pictures are, in themselves, a sufficient and decisive answer. They settle all heresies together, and they settle them finally. Nobody who had once seen these plates could, in honesty, repeat the old tradition of ignorance; the evidence is too irresistible.

There is always in the life of an artist a perceptible movement in some direction; an artist is never stationary. For the last two or three years M. Jacquemart's movement has been in the direction of effect. He had already subjected himself to such a training in the delineation of objects as no other etcher ever underwent, and even then, whilst executing those marvellous studies of still-life for which his name is famous, he had taken a delicate pleasure in effects of light on the objects before him, rendering them with a subtlety of interpretation which already lifted his art high above the common treatment of such subjects. Since then, the search for effect has gradually become his principal artistic purpose, and the close study of pictorial masterpieces involved in the gigantic task he is engaged upon in these, the best years of his artistic career, is visibly leading him more and more in the pictorial direction. This is the natural law of progress in the art of drawing. The great artists begin by copying objects with exquisite care, then gradually they pass to the more and more subtle consideration of aspects, and finally rest satisfied with aspect in its purity, rendering aspect alone, without any thought of substance, retaining just that mastery and memory of substance which is enough to ensure correctness of draughtsmanship wherever it is necessary to effect. Few artists have been more fortunate than Jules Jacquemart in the educational sequence of their labours. By a happy chance, he has always been employed precisely upon the sort of work which was most favourable to his education at the time. He has escaped that misapplication of powers which is so common in the lives of artists, and which is often due to their own misplaced ambition or erroneous estimate of their gifts, or else to the accident of public demand, which takes no account of what is best for the progress of the workmen. Everything that Jules Jacquemart has done has been the very thing that he ought to have done at the time when he happened to be engaged upon it, and, therefore, his education has never been cut short or interrupted, but has been steadily and victoriously progressive.

Yet, however much of this artist's exceptional accomplishment may be due to the right sequence of studies pursued through many laborious years, the inborn natural gifts have in this instance, as in all others, been the most necessary condition of success. Nature gave him, in the rarest degree, the faculties of artistic sight and artistic interpretation, but she withheld the gift of invention. If Jacquemart had possessed the creative faculty he would have taken rank with the supreme artists of the world, and lived for ever with the immortals. Even as it is, posterity is likely to remember him as an eminent artist-engraver who saw with extraordinary perfection and interpreted with extraordinary intelligence and skill. No etcher in past times has ever carried technical mastery quite so far as he has done, and therefore it may be doubted whether the next three hundred years will produce a rival to him in the craft of execution. Think of the cleverest masters of the needle in the way of imitation, even such men as Dietrich and Boissieu; of the most skilful moderns, such for instance as Charles Jacque, men capable no doubt of feats that occasionally astonish us, but not capable of that sustained precision in face of the most overwhelming difficulties which carries Jacquemart safe to the confines of the impossible, and even, as it seems to us, beyond them. I know what marvels of execution are performed by the professional engravers, quietly, as a matter of business, and so commonly that nobody ever wonders at them at all; but in these cases the artist has usually been so far sacrificed to the craftsman that no individual liberty is left, and you can hardly tell the work of one copyist from another till you see his name in the corner. Jacquemart has as much manual skill as if he had nothing else, and yet as powerful artistic perceptions as if he etched roughly like Chifflart or Goya. It is these two opposite qualities which in their harmonious union make him the master that he is. You shall have the pearls on a lady's neck etched as if the artist had done nothing but copy pearls since he was twelve years old; and yet perhaps in the same plate there will occur some passage of dark mystery, bitten as if the spirit of Rembrandt had hovered over the acid-bath and breathed on it a magical benediction.

The ten plates before me are the first instalment of a great series in illustration of the Metropolitan collection at New York. They give us the double pleasure of well-selected originals and the most sympathetic interpretation. It may be worth our while to take them separately and study them with undivided attention.

1. *The Sorceress, by Frank Hals.*—A hideous old sorceress with an owl on her shoulder. She is laughing cynically at the folly of humanity from which she draws her revenues. This is one of the most powerful plates in the series, the execution being full of audacity and rude vigour, as remote as possible (or so it seems) from the delicate handicraft which used to follow the faint shadows on pale porcelain or the fragile transparencies of glass. And yet the old delicacy is here too, like the subtle craft of seemingly plain-spoken masters of mankind. Such work as this reminds me, however incongruously, of Prince Bismarck. It affects no delicacy, and has rough decided manners, the iron point doing its duty without hesitation and without remorse, the corrosive acid eating its poisonous way into fearful depths of darkness; and yet only simple people could be taken in by these appearances, for the work has the tact of the spider and the subtlety of the snake. Look at the white of the right eye, look at the upper teeth, tiny spaces that a speck of dust would cover, and yet absolutely essential to the whole expression of the hideous physiognomy! Observe the thoroughly studied modelling of the muscles of the nose, the lights and the half-lights, bewildering as a swirl of water in moonshine, yet as full of meaning as the most concentrated irony of speech; and the black little eyes like beads, and the vulgar Billingsgate lip, the dark mouth whence the curses issue!

There is much power, too, in the firm line-sketching of the cap and collar, though different indeed from some other and more aristocratic millinery in this series.

2. *Study of a Young Girl for the Paternal Malediction, by Greuze.*—Although this plate is the one given in this periodical, it happens to be, of the whole series, the plate I care for least. We had selected another, but, at the moment of sending the copper to the printer, it was necessary to substitute this, as better able to bear a large impression without injury. It has been rather a disappointment to me for two reasons: the first, that Greuze, though fashionable just now, is one of those artists that no serious critic ever earnestly interested himself about; and the second, because there is nothing in this plate which a good professional engraver could not have done equally well. It may serve, however, as evidence of the capabilities of etching in a direction which the ignorant believe that it cannot successfully follow. They say that etching cannot give texture and local colour—there are both in the hair and the dress; they say that it cannot model—there is modelling enough in the face to puzzle any critic who would undertake to copy it; they say that etching is hard and meagre—is this plate either meagre or hard?

3. *Repose, by Berghem.*—I had not myself supposed that etching could go so far as this in the imitation of a painter's manner, and the peculiar success of this plate opens a most interesting field of speculation and of hope. Photography in its various forms renders touch with admirable fidelity, but then it is grossly unfaithful in the interpretation of colour by light-and-dark, and produces the wildest confusion by this unfaithfulness, even in light-and-shade itself.* On the other hand, line-engraving cannot at all render the touch of the picturesque painters; it is perfectly suited to the interpretation of the classical schools, but just as ill-adapted to the more informal manner of modern naturalism. The burin requires tranquil spaces, the etching-needle can easily follow broken surfaces and ragged outlines. This we knew, but the novel element in this plate from Berghem is the successful imitation of luminous quality in the touches. In work of this kind the touches glisten like dewdrops; they are not paint, but an artful assemblage of jewels. I wonder what Jacquemart would make of the glitter in a dewy Constable; he would give it, I believe, with an unprecedented fidelity. Another reflection which occurs is, whether Berghem could have etched his own picture in this rich pictorial manner. We know what his manner was in his etchings—brilliant enough, but neither pictorial nor rich.

A close examination of the workmanship in this plate reveals so much of its secret as is dependent on method merely, and not on sensitive interpretation. The lines are never laid without great care for their tonic value, and so soon as any line, however short, however apparently necessary to the delineation of form, would interfere in the least with the tonic value of the painter's touch, it is suddenly abandoned, and an empty space left to tell the rest of its story. Treatment of this kind is as consummate, technically, as etching can be. The line is used quite frankly everywhere, and there is no attempt to hide it; but, on the other hand, the artist is never carried away by it, not even to the extent of the thousandth of an inch. The entire absence of that tightness of manner which very young artists often take for delicacy of drawing may possibly incline some of them to pass by this work slightingly, as a careless sketch of landscape. Any one of that opinion is invited, with due respect, just to copy the face of the woman on its own scale.

4. *The Moerdyck, by Van Goyen.*—The sort of subject which Zeeman would have etched in his quaint dry way, and it is highly interesting to observe the effects of Jacquemart's wider experience. Zeeman evidently enjoyed light, and space, and movement; but he had no richness, no *unction,* if I may use the word, nor did he understand fine arrangements of chiaroscuro. This etching from Van Goyen scarcely contains more lines, if they were counted, than one of Zeeman's plates, and yet the difference of arrangement, and of manner, makes this plate opulent and glowing. An ignorant etcher would have given a month of useless labour without getting either the light or the movement of these rolling clouds, or the smoothness of this calm water. There is nothing here but the bare etched line, as frank as possible everywhere, and yet the varied employment of it, to any cultivated spectator, suggests everything of the picture but its colour.

Though this is a merit of the painter's, let me add that the composition of this sea-piece is as subtle and cunning as the composition of a simple subject possibly can be. The concentration of light in the middle, by the golden cumulus and its reflection, the indication of perspective by the two lantern-poles on the sand-banks, brought purposely near in the picture, and contrasted in their leaning, the arrangement of the ships and boats, all in pairs (a common practice with Turner also, but not, as we see, invented by him); the smoke on the distant sand-bank and its reflection marrying earth to heaven and water by a little central cloud—all these things, and more that I have not space to enumerate, prove the most thoughtful artistic intention. Even the cannon-smoke from the ships of war has its pictorial purpose; it gives clouds close to the water, and these clouds help the light, for that nearest the focus of the picture is very much lighter than the other.

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* I need not explain, to habitual readers of an artistic periodical, the difference between light-and-dark and light-and-shade; but a reader quite outside of art may excuse the observation that light-and-dark depends very much on local colour, whereas light-and-shade depends exclusively on illumination.

5. *St. John the Baptist visiting the Infant Jesus, by Jacob Jordaens.*—A composition of eight figures, very rich in tone, and rather a fine example of the homely Dutch way of treating sacred subjects. The Virgin is a comely, black-eyed young Dutchwoman, and the old lady behind a good-tempered, happy old Dutch grandmother. There are two old men, one of them in profile, rather majestic and good-looking, but awkwardly holding his chin in his left hand; the other a simple old fellow, quite absorbed in the contemplation of the scene before him. The most ideal face is that of a benignant angel in the background.

There is a great deal of both strong and delicate work in this etching, but the manner of the painter is not so well adapted as that of some other artists in the series to display the gifts and accomplishments of an aquafortist. Much of this work could have been done as well by a good engraver in mezzotint. Only in the hands and faces of the old people would he have failed to approach Jules Jacquemart. The head of the contemplative old man to the right, and the hand he is leaning upon, are the best examples in this plate of the especial kind of power in which etching, when first-rate, has no rival amongst the arts of reproduction. Readers who possess the plates may with advantage give a few minutes to that hand, with the shadows between the fingers and the strong side-light that catches them, and the true half-tint between light and shadow.

6. *Portrait of Jacob Van Veen, the father of the painter, by Marten Van Heemskerck.*—Very remarkable for its firm, clear drawing, and for the brilliant modelling of the muscles. Pray reflect how clearly an etcher must see everything in a picture before he can copy it in a manner at once so sensitive and so severe! It is all very well to write criticisms on works of art, and say that we appreciate them for this or that quality which they possess, and which may be described in words, but what commentary ever went into the matter so incisively as Jacquemart's etching-needle? What can I write of the clear depth of the old man's steadfast gaze, of the lifetime of experience in the lips, of the strong features that the years have sculptured as with a chisel, that might compare with this striking presentation, or be an equivalent in its absence?

One little minor matter deserves a word of notice. Observe, in the great fur cap, the gradual disappearance of the curls of fur as they pass into deeper and deeper obscurity. It is a good example of gradation in dark tones, and of that most difficult of all gradations where there is little difference in tonic value between one part of the scale and another.

7. *Interior of a Dutch Cottage, by Willem Kalf.*—At the first glance, a critic half-experienced in etching might fancy that this plate had been very imperfectly bitten, and that the etcher could not draw things clearly; but he would be much mistaken, for it is one of the cleverest in the whole set. The subject is the obscure interior of a cottage, with an effect of dull daylight through an unseen aperture of some kind. The play of imperfect light, the passage from light to obscurity, have been rendered by the painter with great care, and the one effort of the etcher has been to make things clear just to the degree which the painter intended, *and no farther.* On the part of Jules Jacquemart this must have needed especial self-denial, for it so happens that there are many things in this picture which, if left to himself, he would have drawn far more brilliantly than the painter. To publish an etching of this kind is certainly a very high compliment to the art-culture of this generation, as it is rather strong meat for babes; but we are bound to praise the forgetfulness of self, and the simplicity of purpose in faithful interpretation of the picture, which are evident throughout this work. An uneducated public would see nothing in it—would not even be able to make out the objects which are indicated by chiaroscuro simply without any

explanatory design, a touch of light, a patch of shade, a half-light, and a reflection. What is the woman doing? I know, but leave the reader to amuse himself by guessing, with the observation that all northern readers will inevitably guess wrong.

8. *Portrait of a Young Woman, by Lucas Cranach the Younger.*—A very faithful and beautiful imitation of a quaint portrait in the costume of the sixteenth century, with a rich coif and necklace and a veil. There is an infinity of exquisite work in this etching, not only in the richly-patterned dress and background, but in the delicate pale shading of the flesh—a delicacy which adds much to the force of the fine dark eyes and eyebrows. The face has a serene, grave beauty of a very original type, and the expression conveys a mixture of tranquillity and firmness, implying eminent domestic qualities. Beautiful as it is, however, this plate may be taken rather as an example of the versatility of etching than of its especial liberty and power. It is impossible, and it would be wrong if it were possible, to interpret a severe and primitive painting like this with the *go* which is quite appropriate for an artist like Frank Hals. Jacquemart's merit here has been to enter thoroughly into the spirit of his original, and to bring to his work a delicacy and right patience answering accurately to the feeling and character of Lucas Cranach himself.

9. *Portrait of a Dutch Burgomaster, by Barthelemy van der Helst.*—A good piece of plain, sound work, not calling for any especial commentary. The reader may observe, in the shading of the face, the natural harmony which exists between etching and the stronger kind of pictorial execution. The best of pictures for reproduction in etching would be those in which the handling was most expressive; such, for instance, as the later works of Rembrandt.

10. *Portrait of a Young Dutch Gentleman, by Adrian de Vries.*—A finely expressive head, with an air of much openness and amenity. The workmanship is soft and rich, of the same quality as that employed for the picture by Jordaens. This is a good instance of the intensity of the blacks that can be obtained in etching, and which constitute one of its superiorities over woodcuts and photographic reproductions. If the reader will place side by side with this print the most powerful woodcut he can find, or the darkest autotype, he will see at a glance that etching goes much farther down in the bass notes, whilst at the same time it is capable of thinner lines for the trebles. Line-engraving and mezzotint share this advantage with etching: these three arts have the full range of tones between pure white paper and a blackness like starless midnight, therefore they are tonically perfect arts, which woodcut and autotype are not. Etchers do not always use the deepest blacks at their disposal, and many etchers do not seem to have been aware of them, but it is a great thing to be able to call these negro slaves when we need their mighty help. I may add, that when etchings are printed in brown this source of strength is greatly diminished. Turner knew this, and the tremendous bitings of the 'Liber Studiorum' plates were intended as a partial compensation. He liked the brown for its warmer look in landscape, but the more extensive gamut of pure black is the true reason why artists have generally preferred it.

The *Metropolitan Museum of New York*, to which these pictures belong, will be new to many of our readers. It has been founded by a private association of gentlemen, lovers of art, with the noble public purpose of encouraging an artistic development in America. Mr. William Blodgett, whose choice collection is celebrated even in Europe, has been the presiding genius of this eminently laudable enterprise. He and his friends were incorporated by a State Charter, in the spring of 1870, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a public collection in New York under the title of 'The Metropolitan Museum.' These gentlemen, by private subscription, have begun to form a collection of authentic original pictures, which are intended to illustrate the history of this art, whilst other arts are also to be illustrated by carefully chosen examples. The purpose of the promoters is not merely to accumulate, but to select intelligently with an educational aim in view. Mr. Blodgett, who spent some time in Europe last year, made a beginning in purchasing, with the advice of M. Étienne Leroy (expert of the Royal Galleries in Belgium), three collections, one of a hundred pictures, another of seventy-five, and a third of fifteen. It is characteristic of American determination that Mr. Blodgett bought all these pictures with his own money and on his own responsibility, trusting simply that their quality might induce his colleagues to authorise the step he had taken. It was an excellent idea to have a hundred of these pictures etched in this way by Jules Jacquemart, both because no art is so suitable as etching for the dissemination of the conceptions of painters, and also because, of all living etchers, Jacquemart is best able to grapple with the great and various difficulties of so considerable an undertaking. Nothing more worthy of encouragement has been attempted for many years.

P. G. HAMERTON.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XIV.—KARL BODMER.

Peacocks.

READERS of this periodical are already familiar with Karl Bodmer's manner as an aquafortist in plates of minor importance, and to-day we offer an example of his work in completer finish and on a larger scale. He is an artist of consummate accomplishment, in his own way, and of immense range. There is hardly a bird or a quadruped of Western Europe that he has not drawn, and drawn, too, with a closeness of observation satisfactory alike to the artist and the naturalist. The bird or the beast is always the central subject with Karl Bodmer, but he generally surrounds them with a graceful landscape, full of intricate and mysterious suggestions, with here and there some plant in clearer definition, drawn with perfect fidelity and care. This plate is quite a representative example of the master, and the reader may profitably study the minute detail of the birds and their plumage, for its minuteness in no way interferes with the grace of the leading forms. No one else in Europe could etch a peacock's train like this ;* the modelling is as full as in carved wood, and the colour, in light and dark, as rich as in a picture, whilst every filament is as light and lively as if the breeze lifted it and the bird himself were just going to whisk all his splendours to the other side of the tree-trunk he is sitting upon. There is as much bird-character in the head of the nearest hen as would suffice for a chapter of ornithology, and it holds its place in the composition by character alone, being no bigger than a leaf, and not distinguished from the leaves by any emphasis of light or dark. The artifice of composition by which the cock-bird is brought out against the lightest space of the clear sky is obvious enough, of course, but it is not wrong, and the present tendency of modern art is rather to despise artifice too much.

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* The reader will pardon the explanation that this refers simply to the study of nature. Karl Bodmer's work, though highly accomplished, does not strikingly set forth the especial technical qualities of etching as an independent art ; in fact it seems to be founded upon engravers' etching, and resembles engraving sufficiently to be confounded with it by students who are not yet familiar with the master. This is a case very similar to that of the English etcher Creswick, who founded himself on the experience of the vignette-engravers, much of whose work was done with the etching-needle. Such work may be very interesting and valuable in its own way, but it is necessary to distinguish. I may observe that this plate affords one illustration the more of the versatility of etching, and its adaptability to the most opposite kinds of artistic expression.

Karl Bodmer's experience in etching is not of recent date, and he preceded rather than shared the present revival of the art. The earliest work of this kind that I know of his, is as elaborately finished as the most careful engraving, and no doubt passed for engravers' work with the public of that day. Since then he has done a great deal in Comte's process, which is nothing but etching in converse: I mean, that it preserves the lines in relief whilst all the blank spaces are eaten out by acid, so that it may be printed as woodcuts are along with letterpress. This process is incomparably inferior in technical resource to etching proper, but it preserves the same liberty of line and is strictly autographic also. One consequence of practising it, in this instance, has been, that when Karl Bodmer resumed the true etching-needle he used it with undiminished skill. He is also a clever painter, and a contributor to the Salons at Paris, where he has lived (or in the neighbourhood) for the last twenty years.

Besides the substantial qualities of his art from the naturalist's point of view, and also from the sportsman's (for it is full of genuine sylvan feeling), I may mention his mastery of the technical processes of etching as something not very common amongst modern aquafortists. His plates are usually drawn at first in their full elaboration and then rebitten several times in the first lines without additional labour. Every etcher knows how desirable it is to be able to rebite with this certainty, and also how difficult. Bodmer hardly ever effaces a line once laid; he makes the acid finish the plate, which it does very obediently: but acid is like certain well-trained animals, that obey their masters and become stupid and rebellious when another assumes command. It might possibly happen, that if we had Bodmer's own mordant we should find ourselves in the same position as the Duc de Morny, who once purchased a *chien savant*, which positively declined to exhibit the least specimen of its abilities after leaving its first instructor.

P. G. Hamerton.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

XIII.—GEORGE ROMNEY (1734–1802).

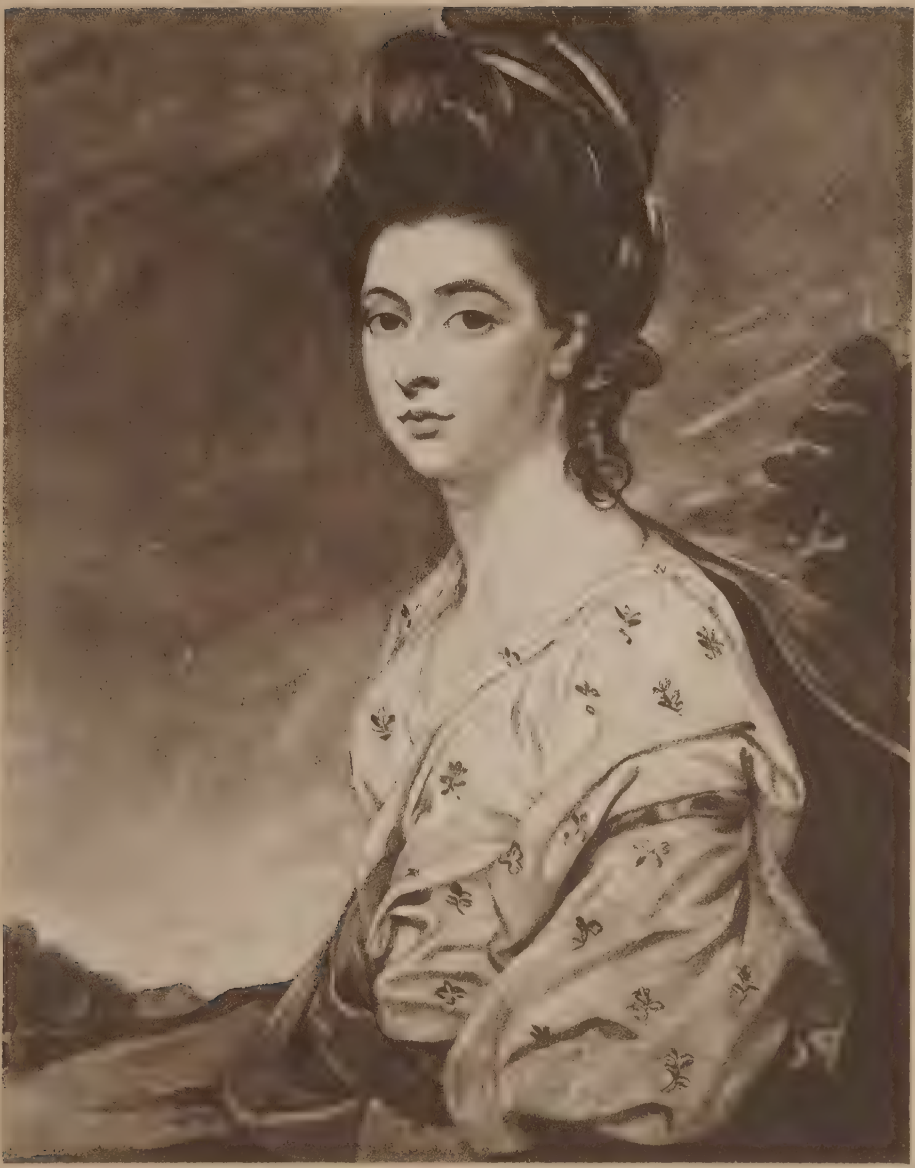
THERE are some men upon whom, as they go about the business of their lives, you seem to see the mark of that which the old cabalists meant when they spoke of a man as having been born under the influence of the Moon. The Moon was the planet which made the imagination of a man his master. To have no Moon in your composition was to have no play of imagination, no capacity for waking dreams. But to have too much Moon was to dream awake all your days. It was to want both perseverance and the sense of reality; it was to have a teeming brain and a seething fantasy; it was to propose a thousand things, and always to let yourself be called off by the next thing from your endeavour to execute the last. The man whose Moon lorded it over his other planets would be one sure of the goal at starting, who should drop out of the race before the end; he would think great deeds, but not achieve them; he would entertain a poet in his bosom, but produce none before the world; he would woo, but not win perfection; he would be always doing and desisting, and not be able to tell you why; he would love, and break off without a cause; be loved, and plague himself with the assurance of coldness; he would be rich, and in dread of bankruptcy; robust, and talk about his ensuing death. Pray for him that the other planets may put forth their influence, may steady and regulate the Moon in him as he grows older, or you shall see him end his days in ineffectiveness, disappointment, and perhaps despair.

Nearly such a man was the painter Romney. Look at his portraits of himself, and trace their type according to the reading of cabalists—the lateral expansion above the temples, the wide shape of the head which indicates straggling and not concentrated powers; the extended impressionable mouth, all poignant sensibility and no determined continuousness of effort; everything mobile and wandering except only the eyes: those are an artist's eyes, and do settle themselves to observe you with the fixity and penetration of the artistic habit. And the look of straggling and mobility, the look of ambition without fixity and without self-confidence, the look of distrust in the midst of fire and eagerness, and of a sensitiveness with no strength for its own control, increase instead of diminishing with age. There are four engraved portraits of Romney by himself, done at different dates of his life. In the latest, which shows him spectacled and very bald at sixty, and is very painful, all the weaknesses and insecurities have increased upon the visage of the dreamer in the first wistfulness of his decay. It looks as if his powers could not hold out for use much longer against age and the overruling Moon. These four portraits, having all the air of complete sincerity, are of immense value for showing Romney to us as he was, and for proving, at the same time, how false must be another well-known portrait—I mean that by Shee, in which all the lower part of the face is filled out and fortified, the head made to look square and massive, the lips firm, almost stubborn, instead of sensitive and utterly incapable of stubbornness; with an air of force and ruggedness added to the whole presence which, in spite of his large stature, must have been quite foreign to it.

Just as Romney's successive portraits of himself make known his presence to us with unusual completeness and significance, so it happens that for his inward man biography has served us with fulness very unusual, and on the whole with tolerable faith. The elegiac Hayley, for one, sensibility's laureate, had early dedicated his muse to Romney's service. He had constituted himself the Marini to this Poussin, the Dufresnoy to this Mignard. He had loved to think of posterity's loving to think of such a friendship between the tender poet and the tender and ardent painter. He had foreseen their linked renown floating indissoluble down the stream of time. And not only had he anticipated posterity in its emotions at such a spectacle; he had even brought himself to contemplate with fortitude the contingency that his friend should die before him; and had pre-ordained himself in that event the friend's biographer. When Romney did come to die, the piety of Hayley was forestalled by the haste of another of his friends, another cultivator of the Muses, the dramatist Cumberland. But Cumberland's memoir was superficial and injurious, and needed the correction of Hayley's 'Life.' When Hayley's 'Life' appeared, Romney's son considered that, too, injurious and superficial, and wrote a corrective biography of his own. From all these sources, Allan Cunningham compiled one of the most spirited and judicious of his 'Lives.' And, lastly, Romney is the subject of an excellent chapter in the Messrs. Redgrave's 'Century of English Painters.' So that, I say, we have him brought near to us, and can understand him. And that is a thing to be grateful for; since Romney, besides being in his strength and weakness of a very interesting and marked type of character, was the third most important personage in English art during its best years,—the years between 1770 and 1790. And besides being the third most important personage in English art, after Reynolds and Gainsborough, his art, as you would expect in a man of many and unstable ambitions, has several faces. It resembles one section of the English school on this side, and another on that; it both resembles and prepares different sections of the school; it is in some sort a focus or radiating point of tendencies.

In the combinations of circumstance and the atoms, the fulness of time had come for the birth of the men who should illustrate England with what she had not yet got, a school of painting. The West Country and Plymouth had done their best in giving birth to Reynolds in the first year of King George II. The Eastern Counties and Suffolk had done their best in giving birth to Gainsborough five years later. Now, in 1734, the North Country and Lancashire did their best in giving birth to Romney. The family of Romney came originally from Appleby in Westmoreland, but were settled in mechanical occupations, since the wars of the Commonwealth, at Dalton-in-Furness of Lancashire. The father of the painter, John Romney, was a man of many trades, farmer and dealer, carpenter, joiner, and cabinet-maker. George was the third son. He got less schooling than his elder brothers, and was put to the joiner's trade at 10 or 11 years old. He showed himself ingeniously minded, made fiddles and played upon them, was fond of his carpentry and of mechanics. He found a friend in one of those stray geniuses, adepts in obsolete lore, who used to exist in country places before improved locomotion had made everybody alike, and staled provincial originality with second-hand metropolitan wisdom. His friendship with Williamson was the first instance of a habit which Romney always had of picking friendship with eccentrics and natural philosophers. Williamson was a convinced alchymist; Romney was a boy all imagination; and Williamson's pursuit of the philosopher's stone will have been as interesting to him as the very dramatic catastrophe which befel that pursuit, and which was this. The critical moment was approaching; the labour of retort and crucible was about to yield the quintessential substance; the philosopher was hanging on the moments. The philosopher's wife had friends to tea; she bade him join them; he denied; she insisted; he yielded; there came a crash from the room where retort and crucible had been left; a rush to see—to find everything shattered and blown up; the philosopher, his consummation crossed, laid it all to his wife's account, and went forth, never to see her face again.

George Romney's first start in life, away from his father's home, was under a cabinet-maker of Lancaster. In that employment, he turned out less diligent at his trade than at a knack he began to show of drawing figures and faces. There was at the neighbouring town of Kendal a young man of the province, who having seen life and been to Paris, where he 'studied chiaroscuro under Vanloo,' had come back, with French airs and extravagances, to practise as a local portrait-painter. The best thing to do with young Romney seemed to be to article him to this practitioner, whose name was Steele. Romney, who had already conceived the ambition positively to push his fortune as an artist, took kindly to the apprenticeship; and it is attested that his master was a man not without talent. Besides Steele's work, the only other examples which the ambitious beginner is reported to have seen, are some Vandycks and Rigauds in the House of the Stricklands of Gizergh. Presently Steele, in the interest of his heart and more particularly of his fortunes, contrives a runaway match with a young lady. His pupil helps, and falls into a fever from the excitement and exposure of the adventure. He is nursed by a kind young girl, Mary Abbott of Kirkland; falls in love with his nurse; and marries her on convalescence, being then under twenty-two. *That* fantasy of the youth's he thus realises in no time. But presently another fantasy seizes him,—whether it is fantasy, whether it is policy, whether it is the drift of circumstances,—that of forgetting his wife and leaving her in the lurch. It is not



M^{RS} ANN PARRY.

BY THE MECHANICAL AUTOTYPE PROCESS, FROM THE MEZZOTINT AFTER ROMNEY.

yet to leave her in the lurch, perhaps, to go without her as he does, in the company of his master Steele, on a nine months' professional visit to York. Here the pupil, besides watching his master while he receives sittings from Sterne and other greater or lesser notabilities, begins trying heads and subject pictures on his own account. By mutual consent and upon mutual concessions, the indentures with Steele are presently cancelled; Steele flits off with his wife to Ireland; Romney returns to his at Kendal, and takes Steele's place as the local portrait-painter of the town and neighbourhood. He is industrious, as in spite of fitfulness he continued to be all his life; and the practical ambition which possesses him, that of pushing his way to London and launching himself in the competition of artists there, serves to keep his energies for the present pretty well to a point. He paints two-guinea heads to order and subject pieces to his fancy, and has a fair provincial success. An exhibition in the Town Hall of Kendal, including, besides portraits, two scenes from 'King Lear' and two from 'Tristram Shandy,' and followed by a raffle, realises 40*l.* But it takes him five years' work to save 100*l.* When he has done this he starts, leaving his wife, in charge of their little son and daughter, with 70*l.*, and taking the rest for his own store.

That was in 1762; and Romney never saw his wife again for thirty-seven years. If we are to trust Hayley, Hayley's friend Romney, 'whose imagination was his master and his tyrant,' must during those years at Kendal have been letting the idea prey upon his mind how marriage was injurious to the prospects of a young man of ambition, how it would not do for him to appear as a married man, how he must be alone to push his fortunes, how he must keep this encumbrance at a distance. Such alarms, such impulses, were part, in Romney, of that sensibility which Hayley calls 'exquisite.' Romney's son, on the other hand, refuses to allow that there was at first any intention or desire whatever on his father's part of separating himself from his wife. Nay, he says that it was by the wife's advice, and with her concurrence, that the husband set out to seek his fortunes by himself. That leaves unexplained Romney's subsequent failure, when he had made his fortune, to remember his wife and summon her to him. In truth, Hayley's account of the matter is the more probable one. It is true that Romney's sensibilities were in their way exquisite; but they were not the sensibilities of conscience; and true, as Hayley is perpetually insisting, that his heart was tender, but it was not with the tenderness of constancy. Hayley is a shrewder man than he seems beneath his maudlin volubility, his bland deluded self-importance, and in spite of the sugared imbecility of his uncounted verses. He is not unacquainted with the nature of those fantastical motives, those motiveless sequences and revulsions of impulse, those groundless inferences passing into aimless acts, which make up the tissue of a life fatally subject to the Moon and to imagination. He surprises you, in the middle of pages of amiable grandiloquent maunder round about his subject, with a sentence here and there which goes to the centre of it. He points a comparison of Romney with Hamlet, and another of Romney with Rousseau, which show a greater sense both of literature and human nature than you would have expected from one whom you are perpetually calling plague upon to yourself as a driveller. And when he accounts for what common sense finds unaccountable in Romney's conduct, by saying that his was 'a mind of exquisite sensibility and towering faculties, but unhappily distracted with a tumultuary crowd of ambitious and apprehensive conceits,' you feel that his grandiloquence has fairly hit it, and that there is not much more to be said.

So the blameless young wife with the girl and boy are left in the North; and Romney, being twenty-eight, commences portrait-painter in Dove Court, Mansion House. The next year he sends in to the Society of Arts a historical picture of the death of Wolfe; and the second prize of 50*l.* is adjudged him. An authority not to be gainsaid having declared that judgment unjust, the prize is transferred to another young competitor, Mortimer; and Romney is put off with an honorary present of 25*l.* Though Romney himself, whose fault never was to be overweening, subsequently acknowledged the reversal of judgment fair, it is said that from thence sprung up the hostile feeling which before long certainly existed between himself and the author of that reversal, who was Reynolds. During Romney's second year in London, he made a trip to France with a lawyer friend, taking an introduction to Vernet; was well received, saw, admired and studied. Coming back, he moves to Gray's Inn; and presently again to Reynolds' own street, Newport Street. The years from 1764–1771 are years of slow but regular success. He gets plenty of portraits to paint, especially among the legal profession; he imagines innumerable historical pictures, paints and exhibits a few, and gets a Society of Arts' second prize with one. Nobody dreams as yet of comparing him with Reynolds, the king of portrait-painters (Gainsborough being still at Bath). His manner is facile, his compositions are thought good and his likenesses better, but his touch rather cold and heavy. In 1769 he makes a great success with a portrait of Sir George and Lady Warren, their little girl and a bullfinch; the next year, another with *Mirth* and *Melancholy;* the next, another with Mrs. Yates as the *Tragic Muse.* That year, his income had risen to 1200*l.* But he had not sought, nor been invited, to be a member of the new Academy incorporated by Royal Charter three years before. Now, he interrupts his career to go on a tour of study to Italy with the miniature-painter, Ozias Humphrey. The actor Cumberland, who was as much Romney's friend as the actor Garrick was the friend of Reynolds, published congratulatory and valedictory rhymes on his departure. He went by Paris, Lyons, Nîmes, Avignon, Aix, Marseilles, Nice; then by boat to Genoa, and by boat again from Genoa to Pisa, and on the latter voyage nearly perished by a storm. He got to Rome, and spent the best part of two years there. Of his course of Italian study, very little trace is on record, except that he was delighted with certain models he found in Rome. He lived alone, having quarrelled with Humphrey, and being full of suspicions and 'apprehensive conceits.' From what he used to say afterwards, it appeared that Correggio had been the chief object of his admiration and emulation in Italy. On his way home, he met Wortley Montague at Venice, and painted his portrait in an Oriental dress, a few days before that personage choked himself with a small bird's bone.

It was Midsummer of 1775 when Romney came back to London, strong in body and apparent health, in the prime of his life, on fire with the ambitions of his art, sure of welcome and patronage; yet rising every morning with hypochondriac tremors, besieged with sitters and doubting whether he should be able to pay his bills. He had established himself in the large house which the death of Coates had just left vacant in Cavendish Square.

Now began the great years of portrait-painting in London, when Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, were all at the high tide of their success together. Reynolds, though he was too urbane and too indifferent for hating, did not love either of his rivals. His name for Romney was 'The Man in Cavendish Square.' The Man in Cavendish Square enjoyed a fast growing reputation. Within a year of his return he had become acquainted with Hayley, who thenceforth constituted himself his titular trumpeter. Having once yielded to the florid solicitation of the poet that he should come and recruit himself at the country seat of Eartham, the 'tender painter' made it his habit for twenty years afterwards to spend some time of each autumn at 'that favourite spot.' There he paints; there he adores and is adored; there he meets a select and sentimental circle of elegiac spirits, profuse in mutual flattery. There he anon meets and wins the regard of more genuine talents. Gibbon, and presently the poet Cowper, and presently again the sculptor Flaxman, are of the society (for it is one of the great merits of Romney's life that he was of those who noticed Flaxman as a boy in the shop of his father the dealer in casts, and discovered and encouraged his genius. And it was at Eartham, where he had come on the introduction of Romney, that Flaxman in 1784 modelled the bust of Hayley, and Romney painted the picture of the sculptor at his work which we have in the National Portrait Gallery).

It was a very genuine affection that subsisted between Hayley and Romney in all these years, and one which often soothed the painter in his seasons of nervous dejection; yet one clearly harmful to him on the whole. For, Hayley stimulated the already morbid activity of his friend's imagination, and encouraged his already fatal habit of projecting, beginning, and leaving undone. He played his part of 'frank and faithful monitor' by flattering his own literary vanity with the perpetual suggestion of new subjects for the painter's fancy. The vast majority of these subjects simply excited Romney; floated before his mind, and away out of it. A number vast nevertheless were got so far as to be flung down in sketches and cartoons, and then abandoned. Every now and then a really impressive cartoon was produced, like that of the *Lapland Witch* at Liverpool. And occasionally a real picture of history or imagination would be painted, or approximately painted. There was the *Milton Dictating to his Daughters;* there was the *Newton with the Prism;* there was the *Alope and her Child;* there were a variety of Shakespeare subjects, and especially those connected with Boydell's enterprise of a 'Shakespeare Gallery' in the years 1786–1789. The origin of that enterprise is by some ascribed to Romney's suggestion, though Fuseli on his part used to claim it for his own. However that may be, Romney at first entered very eagerly into the plan, and conceived a number of subjects. Most of these remained in the state of sketches; two, however, were finished and exhibited, the *Tempest*, and the *Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions;* and these are the two capital examples of Romney's actual attainment in historical and poetical painting.

This matter of the Shakespeare pictures was the cause, as indeed were most other things that happened to him, of a good deal of chagrin and dejection; and his ardour in regard of the undertaking was not long in cooling. But these few years, from 1785 on, to which the Shakespeare work belonged, were the crowning years of his career and reputation. The portrait practice had made enormous strides. The painter's income out of portraits had risen above 3500*l.* a year. The town was avowedly divided into two factions, the Reynolds faction and the Romney faction. Pitt and many great personages sat to Romney. Lord Thurlow was his fast friend and declared himself of his faction. The apologists of his genius and temperament will have it that it was overwork, 'the honourable intemperance of labour,' which all this while was preying upon his nerves and increasing his occasional heaviness of spirit in the midst of professional triumph. They will have it that as he could only turn to those imaginative works which he had at heart when a sitter had disappointed him, or else in the interval of the going of one sitter and the coming of another, so it was no wonder if he carried few of such works through, and if the corridors of his house were stacked with the still-born conceptions of his art. Both accounts have truth in them. The constant work, the pressure of portraits upon his time, would have prevented any one else in Romney's circumstances from finishing many paintings of another class. But Romney under any other circumstances, Romney with leisure and without fame, would have been the same as he was now. He would have known more than men born under another star of that of which we all know something—the pain it costs the teeming mind to keep at home and to bring to good the family so smiling at the birth, and anon so flitting, so truant and full of mockery—the family of our desires and schemes, and the thoughts that would make us great if they would stay with us.

I do not know that the exact date can be ascertained, but it was in this best time of Romney's life, that he came under the influence of the woman whose face and figure haunt his art henceforward, and enkindle his pictures both from life and from imagination with a new fire and charm. That is one of the things in Romney, besides his personal and intellectual character, of which I have already spoken, and his position in reference to other talents of the school, of which I shall have yet to speak, which make him so interesting a person in the annals of English art. It takes one back to the days of the old Italian artists —to the mystic and recurring smile of Lionardo's *Mona Lisa,* to the suave cajoling witchery of Andrea del Sarto's *Lucrezia,* to the superb disdain of Bordone's misnamed *Violante* beneath her crown of golden hair—when we see the work of a later artist so filled and haunted as Romney's at this time comes to be with a single face and form—the face and form of one beautiful and entrancing without a soul that is her own, one made all for love and lavishness and mimicry—the face and form of Emma Lyon.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

(*To be continued.*)

OLD HOUSES AT RYE, AND A SUFFOLK VILLAGE.

NEITHER Suffolk nor Sussex are counties eminent for the beauty of their scenery; and of the former especially it may be noted that the landscape-painter, like the wise men of old, invariably comes *from* the East. And yet it must be remembered that low countries in general have been famed for their high art; and the art of etching in particular may be said to have had its birth amid the mud flats of Holland. In fact, of the Fine Arts it is most true that

'we receive but what we give,
And in ourselves alone does Nature live.'

The eye sees what it takes with it the power of seeing; and I suppose that the artist is essentially the man whose eye has been trained to *see.* A low marshy land of water-meadows, a pollard willow or two, a few cows lazily chewing the cud,—what have we here to interest or please? But Cuyp bathes the landscape in the sun-glow of his genius; and lo! a picture which we all agree to call beautiful, and which gives us a pleasure we should possibly not receive from the flat and marshy landscape itself. High Art, then, may perhaps be roughly defined as the distillation of natural fact into the strong spirit of beauty in the alembic of the artist's brain; or, as Mr. Browning somewhere sings:—

'We're made so, that we love,
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times, nor cared to see.
And so they are better painted; better to us,
Which is the same thing—Art was given for that.'

The present writer, of course, claims no such transmutative power for the treatment of the two little etchings published in this month's PORTFOLIO—Old Houses at Rye, and a Suffolk Village. The sketches, however, were made in accordance with what he believes to be the first canon of the etcher's art—they were finished at a sitting; and should therefore bear something of the unity of a single impression. Old houses already tottering to their fall: they have a picturesqueness about them, doubtless, of strong light and shadow, and of quaint window and of overhanging gable-end; but what strong lights and shadows of human interest gather about their hundred years of human tenancies, linger upon the lintels of their doors, and throng beneath the pent-house of their overhanging eaves? Many generations of men —without a history—have lived and died here. Here the bride has been brought home in gladness, and the mother has been borne forth to her burial. Down these old staircases little feet have pattered, bringing mirth and peace with them as they came. Here men's hearts have gone forth towards their first-born, and here 'they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead.' Such strong investiture of human interest gathers about old houses such as these, now colonized by tramps and beggars, and soon to vanish into the limbo of a suburban dust-heap.

And the Suffolk village, again; it is but a hollow scooped in the chalk hills by the rush of some primeval current, or the slow grinding of a glacier stream. And in this hollow, sheltered from the rude east winds which sweep over the surrounding hills, a little colony has gathered, these thousand years back, around the grey, flint-built church-tower which rises darkly against the amber glow that lingers in the west. Evening is come, which the Hebrews called 'the breeze of the day.' Man has gone forth to his work and to his labour, and is now returning to his rest. Fires are lighted, and the evening meal is set for 'father.' The merry voices of children, let loose from school, float upon the still air very musical and sweet. The gate of the pathway across the meadows clicks upon its latch for the last time. And there is something calm and soothing in the peaceful twilight in which the little Suffolk village enwraps itself ere it takes its nightly rest.

ROBERT HAYNES CAVE.

THE PLEASURE OF THE AMATEUR.

THE pleasure of the artist has a double source—he delights both in the positive beauty he achieves and in the mastery with which he achieves it; and he is the only man who knows or can know adequately what he does, and how and why he does it. As is reasonable the workman has the best of his work, and all other enjoyment of it is a more or less imperfect imitation of his. The pleasure of the connoisseur is founded on an imitation of the artist's knowledge; he understands to a certain extent in what the technical excellence of the artist consists, the kind of difficulties that he has to overcome, the relative success with which he approximates to nature, the positive value of the final result. This intellectual sympathy leads to a purely rational satisfaction, which can be explained and accounted for. Because it can be completely analysed, it is likely to absorb the attention of an analyst. Adam Smith maintained that art only gives us pleasure through our appreciation of the difficulties which it has to overcome. But the pleasure of the artist has another side, and a reflection of this also is possible to those who are not artists. Strictly speaking, intelligence is not necessary to the enjoyment of the amateur at all; for his pleasure is not in the conditions of beauty, which can be stated with precision and accuracy, as they can be produced with conscious intention, but in the ethereal, intangible essence of beauty itself. Of course this pleasure admits of being heightened by intelligence, because our sensations and emotions are quickened and made keener by the training of the intellect; but the pleasure itself is not intellectual. It is hardly even objective; it begins where the pleasure of the artist culminates: its point of departure is the completed beauty of the work of art, the converging beauties of nature which are summed up in it. The pleasure of the artist is in the beauty, the pleasure of the amateur is in the impression that it leaves. It might seem that the pleasure of the amateur was only a refined form of the pleasure of the Philistine, who values art just so far as it reminds him of pleasant experiences and gratifying emotions; but though the amateur differs from the artist in finding his pleasure in himself, he does not find his pleasure where the Philistine finds it, in whatever intensifies his ordinary self. On the contrary, he wishes to be carried out of his ordinary self as far as he has strength to go; the measure in which art helps him to attain a spirit of detachment is to him the measure of the value of art. Thus the quality which the amateur requires before all others is purity of intention and a certain singularity, for he wishes to have his spiritual nature roused, and when roused it will take its own course. One result of this is, that the amateur often sees more in a given work of art than the artist, because to the artist as such the work of art is the goal: to the amateur it is not a goal, but a vehicle. Art, in proportion to its richness and perfection, attains something of the inexhaustible suggestiveness of nature; only this suggestiveness seems to be of the essence of nature, and rather an accident of art: at least it lies beyond the direct intention of the artist, while it is always the ultimate object of the amateur. But many artists may be truly admirable who are not in the least stimulating or suggestive, and to these the amateur is inevitably unjust. It may be said in general that the artist and the connoisseur always estimate a work of art by its appropriateness to the medium in which it is carried out, by the success with which it fulfils the conditions of that medium and avails itself of them; but the amateur disregards such considerations altogether: for him the value of a painting is what it may have in common with a poem or a piece of music. Hence an artist like Giorgione interests the amateur; an artist like Veronese, with his splendid technical achievements, wearies him. Veronese is essentially a decorative artist, but as such he is too much of a naturalist for the amateur. A connoisseur would be more than satisfied with the broad vigorous glow and rich magnificence of Veronese, but the amateur forgets the limited range and unreality of artists like Whistler and Moore, for the sake of their piquancy and remoteness. Again, there can be little question that Flandrin surpasses Ary Scheffer in technical knowledge and completeness, but his work has no literary value, and so makes little or no appeal to the amateur. On the other hand, there are purely pictorial qualities which have a literary value of their own. Nothing can be poorer than the conception of the story in Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' the mere startled figure of Ariadne is as vulgar as Silenus with the snake climbing over him. Bacchus is better, and that is all: his attitude just passes, and the expression of his face just reaches, the dignity of average boyhood at its best. Yet for the amateur as well as the artist it is one of the great pictures of the world. The incident is made earthly enough, but it takes place in no earthly medium: we may doubt if the heads are poetical; there can be no doubt about the draperies; the whole picture is full of passion and rapture, not the rapture of love human or divine, but the solemn palpitating glow of purple twilight.

To resume, the artist and the connoisseur take an habitual and intelligent pleasure in the specialities of art. The amateur can only snatch glimpses of an irrational ecstasy in its generalities, and these, too, are within the reach of the artist; only the pleasure of the amateur transcends its occasion, the pleasure of the artist rests in its cause. The pleasures of the higher senses, sight and hearing, belong to amateur, artist, connoisseur alike; the refinements of taste appeal especially to the connoisseur, while the shadowy domain of touch and smell is left to the amateur. Or, to illustrate from the single sense of sight, sunlight corresponds to the pleasure of the artist, common daylight to that of the connoisseur and critic, and starlight to that of the amateur.

G. A. SIMCOX.

CANINE GUESTS.*

HAVING heard a few weeks since that two very wonderful dogs were performing within fifty miles of my house, I invited them to come and visit me. The answer came by telegraph, not from the dogs themselves, but from their owner, M. du Rouil, and on the appointed day and hour I drove off to meet them. They were invited to dine and spend the evening; and as the weather was very wet they stayed all night and breakfasted the next morning, so that I had every opportunity of making their acquaintance.

Madame du Rouil informed me that her husband had been for ten years a teacher in a deaf-and-dumb institution, which had given him the idea of trying how far a similar method of education might develope the intelligence of dogs. He had also been a conjuror, and these two professions had prepared him for the one he at present exercised. When he began to train his first dog it was not with any idea of future profit, but simply out of curiosity to see the effects of the sort of education which seemed to him best adapted for establishing a close understanding between the human and canine minds. Seeing that the plan succeeded he began to take the dog with him to the entertainments he gave in Paris, and as the public were interested he went on educating his pupil. Since then he has educated two other dogs on the same principles, one of whom has completed her training, whilst the other is an advanced, but not yet a finished, student.

I had a good opportunity, at dinner, of observing the master himself. There was not the faintest trace of anything like charlatanism in his manner. A very quiet, grave, serious, even sad-looking old gentleman, dressed soberly in black, he talked about places he had visited and about the political news of the day. The impression he made upon us was altogether favourable. He reminded me most of some respectable old schoolmaster or librarian, who had seen a good deal of the world and reflected on what he had seen, but whose thoughts were tinged with a deepening gravity, the result of narrowed fortune and weakened health. I learned afterwards that there were ample reasons for this sadness. M. du Rouil had had two sons killed in the war and another severely wounded, whilst his daughter, a pretty girl of eighteen, had been killed by a shell at Neuilly in the sanguinary days of the Commune. His house, too, had been sacked by the Communards, and a small business which his wife managed had been put an end to. The capital invested in that little business had been earned by the dog Bianca, of whom, and her daughter Lyda, it is time to give a description.

Bianca, or Blanche, as her master familiarly calls her, is a bitch of the pure *caniche* breed. I use the French word because although we have an English one, 'poodle,' I rather think that the word poodle does not distinguish between the real *caniche* and the *chien-mouton*, another very intelligent breed from which performing dogs are frequently taken. Of M. du Rouil's three pupils one is a pure *caniche*, the other (Lyda) is a cross between the *caniche* and the spaniel, whilst the third is a *chien-mouton*, thorough-bred. The *caniche* is silky-haired and has often patches of brown about the face, but the white hair is like snow, whereas the *chien-mouton* approaches both in colour and texture much more nearly to the sheep, and never has any patches of brown. Only Blanche and Lyda came to my house; the other dog has begun to perform in public, but is not yet so accomplished as these two.

They behaved at dinner exactly like common dogs, but when I offered Blanche a piece of cheese and asked if she knew the word for that substance, her master answered that she could spell it very correctly. I had invited a few friends to meet these learned animals, and when they were assembled in the drawing-room we made the little preparations which M. du Rouil said would be most convenient. A large octagonal library-table was put in the middle of the room with a cloth of one colour and a lamp in the centre. Round this table Madame du Rouil laid cards with all the letters of the alphabet, printed in large capitals. There was also a little hand-bell. At a sign from her master Blanche jumped upon the table and sat in an attitude of expectation. Then M. du Rouil turned to me and said, 'I promised you that the dog should spell *fromage*. Blanche, spell *fromage*.' Blanche immediately set about her work and brought an F, an R, and an O, then she hesitated. 'You have only given us three letters, and there are seven in the word.' On this, she soon found M, A, G, E, and the word was complete. The next task was a translation. We were invited to write upon a slate any Latin, German, or English word in which the same letter did not occur twice. Some one present wrote, in German hand-writing, the word Pferd, and M. du Rouil showed the slate to Blanche. She either read it or pretended to read it, and made a sign that she understood by putting the slate down with her paw. 'Now give us the French for that word;' she immediately brought C, and then H, E, V, A, L. 'As you are spending the evening at an Englishman's house, Blanche, would you oblige him by translating that word into English?' Without hesitation the dog gave me an H, and with very little hesitation the remaining letters O, R, S, E.

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* There is so much in this paper which must naturally seem incredible, that I think it necessary to assure the reader how scrupulously I have endeavoured to narrate the facts simply as I saw them. On my honour, the narrative is, if not absolutely true, at least as true as I can make it by a comparison of what I observed myself with the observations of a dozen other witnesses.

Notwithstanding her success, the dog seemed to set about her work very unwillingly, and it was evidently a great effort to her. The authority of the master, though very gently exercised, appeared to be irresistible, exactly like that of a mesmerist over his patient. Blanche complained audibly the whole time with a sound between growling and whining and occasionally a short bark of uneasiness. Observing this, I said that for the present that part of the performance might be considered satisfactory, and we would pass on to something else. M. du Rouil then told us that Blanche could correct bad spelling, and invited me to write a word on the slate with an intentional fault in it. He showed the slate to the dog, and said, 'There is a fault here, Blanche; find it out, and show us first what letter ought to be effaced.' The word I had written was *maison*, but I had spelt it *mêson*. The dog immediately brought the letter E. Then M. du Rouil requested Blanche to show us what letters ought to be substituted, and she fetched an A and an I.

As Blanche seemed tired and worried with this kind of work I intervened on her behalf, and she was allowed to go and curl herself up in a corner, and eat cakes. Lyda took her place on the table, and a set of figures were substituted for the alphabet. Some arithmetical problems were written on the slate and she resolved them (or appeared to resolve them) without a single mistake. A very pretty incident occurred at this period of the performance, for the master proposed a little mental arithmetic. 'Now, Lyda,' he said, 'I want to see whether you understand division. Suppose you had ten pieces of sugar, and you met ten Prussian dogs, how many lumps would you, *une Française*, give to each of the Prussians?' Lyda very decidedly replied to this with a cipher. 'But now suppose that you divided your lumps of sugar with me, how many would you give me?' Lyda took up the figure 5, and presented it to her master.

This was pretty enough, but for reasons of my own I was much more interested in something that happened immediately afterwards. M du Rouil *quitted the room*, the door was closed after him, and he called out, 'Which is the least valuable figure?' Lyda brought me the cipher. Then her master said, 'Which is the most valuable figure?' the dog brought me the 9. After this I asked for different figures which the dog gave me without a single mistake.

It was Blanche's turn next, but this time instead of being surrounded with the letters of the alphabet she was surrounded with playing-cards. M. du Rouil had another pack in his hand, and told us to choose a card. 'Blanche, what card has been chosen?' The dog always took up the right card in her teeth. Then she played a game with a young lady, and lost it, after which she rushed from her seat into the corner with an air of the deepest humiliation.

A very surprising thing followed the game at cards. M. du Rouil begged me to go into another room and leave a light on the floor with a pack of cards arranged all round it and to close the doors as nearly as possible without shutting them. This being done, he begged any one present to whisper in the dog's ear the name of a card to be fetched by her from the other room. A lady whispered the 'knave of hearts,' if I remember rightly, but in so low a voice as to be inaudible even by the dog, which made a mistake, and brought something else. She was then requested to bring the ace of spades, and she soon came back from the dining-room with the ace of spades in her teeth.

Both the dogs played a game at dominoes. This was managed as follows: the dogs sat on chairs opposite each other, and took up the domino that was wanted; but the master or mistress placed it, and kept announcing the state of the game. Their distress when they could not go on without drawing upon the bank was expressed in piteous whines, and amused us all immensely. Lyda was the loser, and she precipitately retreated to hide herself, with an evident consciousness of defeat.

I had not quite done with my literary examination of Bianca, so I had the alphabet replaced and began again. I asked her what was the English for *chien*, and she put the letters D, O, G, into my own hand. Then I asked her to spell *feu* for me, and she gave me the three letters F, E, U. Here an incident occurred which, notwithstanding the marvels we had witnessed, thrilled us all with new amazement. M. du Rouil interposed, and said, very gently, 'Blanche, you have spelt the word correctly in the singular, but cannot you give the plural?' The readers of the 'PORTFOLIO' may believe me or not, as they like, but the truth is, that she took up the letter X between her teeth and came to me and placed it in my hand. I asked her to give me the English for *feu*, and wrote it down and handed it to M. du Rouil, but he said she had not yet learned that word, and this defect in her education could not be remedied at once.

During the whole of this entertainment my mind was intently occupied with a single problem, *What did the dogs really know?* I had been told a few days previously, by a gentleman who had very keen powers of observation, that a system of signals existed between M. du Rouil and his dogs, by which he made them understand which card they ought to take, and this gentleman believed that he had detected the most important signal of all. 'When M. du Rouil means *no* he advances towards the table, and when he means *yes* he retires from it.' Another observer, younger and much less intelligent, had told me that M. du Rouil, having been a teacher of the deaf and dumb, simply used signs with his fingers, which the dogs had learned to read. These two theories may be disposed of very summarily. When the entertainment began with the literary examination of Bianca, M. du Rouil stood on the hearthrug, with his back to the fire, and did not advance or retreat one inch; whilst at the conclusion, when she gave the plural to the word *feu*, I myself occupied M. du Rouil's place, and he was seated in an arm-chair, like the other spectators, and with his back to the table. It is clear, therefore, that the theory about advancing and retreating is not an explanation. Now, as for the other theory, that he communicates with the dogs by means of manual signs, like those used with the deaf and dumb, I need only observe that M. du Rouil's hands were as motionless as his feet. When we began with *fromage*, *pferd*, &c., he held a tray in his right hand, the arm being pendent by his side, whilst the left hand was behind his back, the fingers closed, and as motionless as those of a bronze Napoleon on a chimney-piece. He did not even reserve to himself such liberty of motion as might have been secured by taking the letters from the dog, for when I proposed to take the letters myself he made no objection whatever, but sat down quietly and let me do the showman's work. It is certain that the communication was not made by any motion of the body; this, at least, I can affirm quite positively. Was it done by the expression of the eyes? At first we thought that this might be just possible; but the table was octagonal, and the dog found the letters when her back was turned to her master as easily as when she could look him in the face; besides, when M. du Rouil was seated, and I was the showman, he did not look towards the dog at all, but at the fire. Whatever communication did take place must have been entirely by intonations of the voice, but we could hear these as well as the dogs could, and with all our listening we could detect nothing like a regularly recurring and easily recognisable signal. When he asked Blanche to turn *feu* into the plural, he did it exactly with the words and in the manner that you would use to a child at school. He often encouraged the dogs with such words as *Allons, allons! Cherchez, cherchez bien! Vite, vite, vite!* but he went on with these encouragements exactly in the same words and in the same tone after the word was completed to put the dog's knowledge to the test, and she went on seeking, and then whined and rang a bell to say that there were no more letters needed. I had been told that Blanche could, of course, spell any word that her master could spell, because she only took the letters he fixed upon, yet he said she could not spell *fire* for me. This, however, may have been a ruse on his part, and I do not insist upon it.

If the dogs had appeared to know rather less we should have believed that the knowledge was really theirs, but then they seemed to know too much. Lyda showed us some tricks with numbers, that are familiar to arithmeticians, but clearly beyond the canine comprehension. This satisfied me that some communication existed, and yet I was utterly unable to detect it. It is clear, therefore, that the dogs understood and acted upon a system of signalling which the intelligence of the human spectators was not keen enough to discover. I had invited several intelligent friends, and told them previously that my object was to discover the secret of the confederacy between M. du Rouil and his dogs, begging their best assistance. They watched him as closely as I did, but could detect nothing.

Remembering an odd notion of Sydney Smith's, that people might be taught to read by odours, the idea occurred to me that M. du Rouil might contrive to touch the cards that the dogs selected, and curiously enough they certainly smelt them rather than looked at them. But how could such a supposition be reconcilable with the fact that M. du Rouil kept at a distance from the table, and could not possibly foresee the words that we asked for? I only mention this hypothesis of reading by odour to show to what straits we were reduced in our guessing.

As the dogs and their owner were to stay all night at my house, I determined to have a quiet talk with him when everybody else was gone, and get at the secret if I could. So when we were quite alone together I plied him with indiscreet questions, and he was frank enough up to a certain point, but beyond that point absolutely impenetrable.

He confessed at once that there was a secret, but he said, '*La ficelle est bien cachée*,' as indeed it was. According to his account, which was probably quite true as far as it went, the dogs were like actors, who had not quite thoroughly mastered their parts, and he himself was like the prompter near the footlights. To begin with, Blanche really knew the letters of the alphabet and the playing-cards by their names, and Lyda really knew all the figures. In addition to this, he said that Blanche had studied about a hundred and fifty words in different languages, something like twenty in each language, words most likely to be called for, such as *chien*, dog, horse, cat, pferd, canis, &c. &c. The restriction to one set of letters simplified the business considerably. But M. du Rouil confessed quite frankly that she could not get through a word unless he were present. On the other hand, he could not make her spell a word in public that she had not before practised with him in private. So it was with Lyda and the figures. She really knew the figures when isolated, and this had been satisfactorily demonstrated when he left the room, and she gave me the number asked for, up to 9. But he would not tell me the secret of the confederacy. I told him what guesses had been made on the subject, but he simply answered that I must have observed how impossible it was for him to make signs with hands or feet when he moved neither hand nor foot.

Would he give me some account of the earlier stages of training through which these dogs had passed? Yes, very willingly. The first thing was to teach a dog to fetch an object, the next to make him discriminate between one of two very different objects placed together, and bring one or the other as it was mentioned by its name. In beginning the alphabet he put two most dissimilar letters side by side to begin with, such as an O and an I, avoiding the confusion of similar ones, such as O and Q, or B and R. Gradually, the dog became observant enough to discriminate between letters in which the difference was not so marked. M. du Rouil told me that he had found the greatest difficulty in teaching Blanche to distinguish between the knaves and kings in playing-cards, but that she learned the aces very promptly. With regard to the time required for educating a dog sufficiently to perform in public, he said that an hour a day for eighteen months was the time required, and he preferred a single hour to a longer lesson, because the dog's powers of attention were soon fatigued. He added, that it was impossible to educate a dog at any other time than the middle of the night, because the slightest sound disturbed it, and made it forget the work that had to be done. I inquired what, after his ten years' experience, was his opinion of the intelligence of dogs, and he answered, with great emphasis, 'that it is infinite.'

Beyond this he would tell nothing. The only supposition not immediately annihilated by the facts, is that the *tone of voice* used in uttering the words '*Allons, allons; Cherchez, cherchez bien; Cherchez encore; Vite, vite, vite,*' conveyed to the animal, 'You are far from the card,' 'You are nearer the card,' 'That is the card you must take up;' but even here there were great difficulties, for M. du Rouil continued, as far as we could detect, in the same tone after the completion of the word, and yet the dog never brought a superfluous letter. The marvellousness of so perfect a confederacy may be better understood by supposing a human confederate in the dog's place. Such a human confederate, not knowing the words to be composed, would be very liable to make mistakes, and bring a wrong letter from time to time; but Blanche never made one mistake—never brought one wrong letter.

I certainly observed that when she got near the letter she always hesitated between it and its neighbours on each side, but she always finally took the letter that was wanted. She got on much faster with one or two words than she did with the others, and seemed to need less encouragement. My conclusion was, that from long practice with certain familiar words (she had worked at the business daily for several years) she could compose those words with very little help. The last word, *feu*, and the X to make a plural of it, were given quickly, others not so quickly. The use of the X was clever, but not so surprising as it seemed to us at the moment, for with a dog so well trained as Blanche it would be easy, I should imagine, to associate the word 'plural' with the image of the letter X. Very probably Blanche had been taught, in her private lessons, to fetch that letter whenever '*pluriel*' was asked for. As for the translation, without going so far in credulity as to fancy that the dog really translated, I may suggest that from long practice there would certainly arise in her mind an association of ideas between *cheval* and *horse*, *chien* and *dog*, since the words must have been asked for hundreds or thousands of times in that close connexion, so that she would at least be better prepared to spell *dog*, after having just spelt *chien*.

An incident occurred in the course of the evening which showed some understanding of language. A little girl wanted Blanche to come to her, but the dog kept away, on which Madame du Rouil said, 'Blanche, allez saluer la petite demoiselle.' She immediately went up to the little girl and made a formal obeisance. A lady present, the daughter of a landowner in the Sologne, told us that on her father's estate the shepherd's dogs were taught to go in four directions at the word of command—*à droite*, *à gauche*, *en avant*, and *en arrière*.

The conclusion we arrived at was, that the performance resulted from an extremely clever combination of previous training with scarcely perceptible prompting, that the dogs were really wonderfully educated and knew a great deal, though not so much as they appeared to know. The game at dominoes was decidedly the prettiest instance of their real knowledge, for they took up the numbers just as they were asked for. It seems evident that an intelligent dog might be taught to know a considerable variety of objects by their names.

M. du Rouil told us an anecdote of Blanche which may be easily believed by anyone who has made her acquaintance. He was going home one night from Paris to Neuilly, after a performance, and saw a man who was seeking for some object that he had lost. 'What are you seeking?' he asked. The man answered that he had lost 280 francs. 'Possibly my dog may be able to find them for you; have you any money left? If you have, show her a piece of gold. *Allez, cherchez, Blanche!*' The dog set out and fetched first one piece of gold and then another and then a bank-note till the 280 francs were completed. Then followed many other anecdotes about dogs of which I select these. A lady said that she had known a dog that belonged to a celebrated publisher in Paris who had a country-house at Auteuil. Every Friday his family went to Auteuil, and always regularly found the dog there on their arrival. He went alone, through Paris, from the *Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie*, and he never made a mistake about the day. The family frequently went out on other days, but on these occasions the dog stayed contentedly at home. Another dog that she had also known had been bred in a strictly Catholic family, and would never touch meat on a Friday. Bets were made, and the greatest temptations used to overcome his conscientious scruples, but always in vain. He was shut up in a room during a whole Friday with meat in his reach, but preferred to suffer hunger rather than touch it. One of my friends mentioned a dog that he knew quite well which lost its master three years ago from small-pox, and ever since then, in all weathers, has paid a daily visit to the cemetery, where it mourns upon his grave. The widow goes to the grave on Sundays after mass, the dog knows this, waits for her at the church-door, and accompanies her

Lyda has one quality which would make her invaluable to an artist. Every painter who has attempted to draw dogs knows how provokingly restless they always are, and how impossible it is to study them as we do the human model. But Lyda *poses* as perfectly as any human model at the Royal Academy. I made a drawing of her the morning after the performance and was delighted. *Literally not a hair stirred during the whole time.* She had the stillness of a stuffed animal in a museum, with that perfection of living form which no taxidermist was ever yet able to imitate or preserve. A dog so perfectly trained as Lyda would be a priceless treasure for an animal-painter. Blanche *poses* fairly well, but she is not to be compared with Lyda. I wish I could give some notion of Lyda's eyes; they have the strangest half-human expression as if there were half a soul behind them. Her master says that she looks at him with an intensity that is quite painful when she is trying with all her might to understand what he wishes her to learn. I declare that this creature's looks are enough to frighten you if you dwell upon them, it seems as if some unhappy child-soul had been imprisoned in that canine shape. Are these poor dogs happy in their strange unnatural life? They are tenderly cared for, and their master says that whoever beats a dog gives evidence of his own personal stupidity, for a dog always tries his best to understand, and you can make things clearest to him by gentle teaching if you know how to teach at all. And still these dogs look over-wrought, and nervously anxious, they have just the very look which you may notice in over-worked professional men. Ah, poor humble canine brethren, specimens of mental culture, are we not in the same perilous trade? And would it not have been better for all three of us if instead of giving ourselves up to letters we had passed a careless, sylvan life under the good green wood?

P. G. HAMERTON.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XV.—HORATIO J. LUCAS.

Le Mans.

MR. LUCAS is an amateur of whose earnestness in the pursuit of etching there already exist a considerable number of plates to testify. He appears to aim always at truthfulness of character, and succeeds very happily in conveying the impression or spirit of a place. His work is absolutely unconventional and disconnected from pictorial tradition, but not disconnected from the work of some true aquafortists of the past. This distinction may already be familiar to some students of the fine arts, who will have observed that certain etchers (I may mention Appian and Palmer as instances of this) always etch as if they were thinking of pictures; whilst others, like Whistler, etch directly for etching's sake, without reference to pictorial harmonies and arrangements. A very distinguished living etcher once observed to me that, in his opinion, the purpose of the art ought to be the transcript of a simple impression without much care about composition. Etchers who work in this spirit preserve, no doubt, a certain freshness which is often very valuable, and may be a compensation for elaborate arrangements of pictorial effect.

The works of Mr. Lucas are always perfectly sincere, and give the most faithful impression of the scenery they describe. The word *describe* comes naturally here, for we read these works like passages of some observant modern author, such as Dickens or Mrs. Gaskell. There is a strong literary element in them. His plate of *Northfleet* is a description of an expanse of bare land, with a very high horizon, and vessels sailing on all but invisible water,—the sort of place that a novelist would seize upon at once for its peculiar effect upon the mind. The plate says to us quite plainly,—'See what a dreary bit of the earth's surface this is, and how odd it is that those vessels should be sailing up there across it!' So with the view of Hanley, in which a row of factories with tall smoky chimneys stretches all across the subject, and the foreground is nothing but one of those dark flat deserts which edge our manufacturing towns, and are destined to be covered with cottage property and additional mills as the trade of the place increases. The temper of this work is curiously in contrast with that other temper which leads mill-operatives to the study of botany, and the beauty of the lovely Lancashire cloughs and burns. At Charlois, near Rotterdam, Mr. Lucas is struck by the aspect of a dyke, with a row of polled willows and a gate, and he draws it so faithfully that we feel as if we actually were there. In all this prosaic realism there is a basis of deep poetry, but the poetry is of a kind distinct from that which painters usually seek for and enjoy. It is the poetry of an unflinching observation of the common-place world in which so many men have to work and live. Although there is scarcely a figure in these etchings, they have always human interest for their key-note. In the plate of *Chestnut-sellers* (two poor women in a poor quarter of a continental town) this human interest is obvious to every one. The women are not either young or pretty, but they are pathetic. The etching is not done to show how picturesque poverty may be made to look, but to bring home to us a hard reality; and it makes us think more about the life these women lead than about amusing irregularities of line or effective touches of light-and-shade. From the simply pictorial point of view, the finest subject which Mr. Lucas has etched as yet is this view of Le Mans, under a powerful effect of light. The motive of his work is usually a strong and earnest realism, rather than the search after pictorial beauty. Let me add, in conclusion, that it is always technically sound, both in the right use of line and in the biting.

P. G. HAMERTON.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

XIII.—GEORGE ROMNEY (*continued*). 1735–1802.

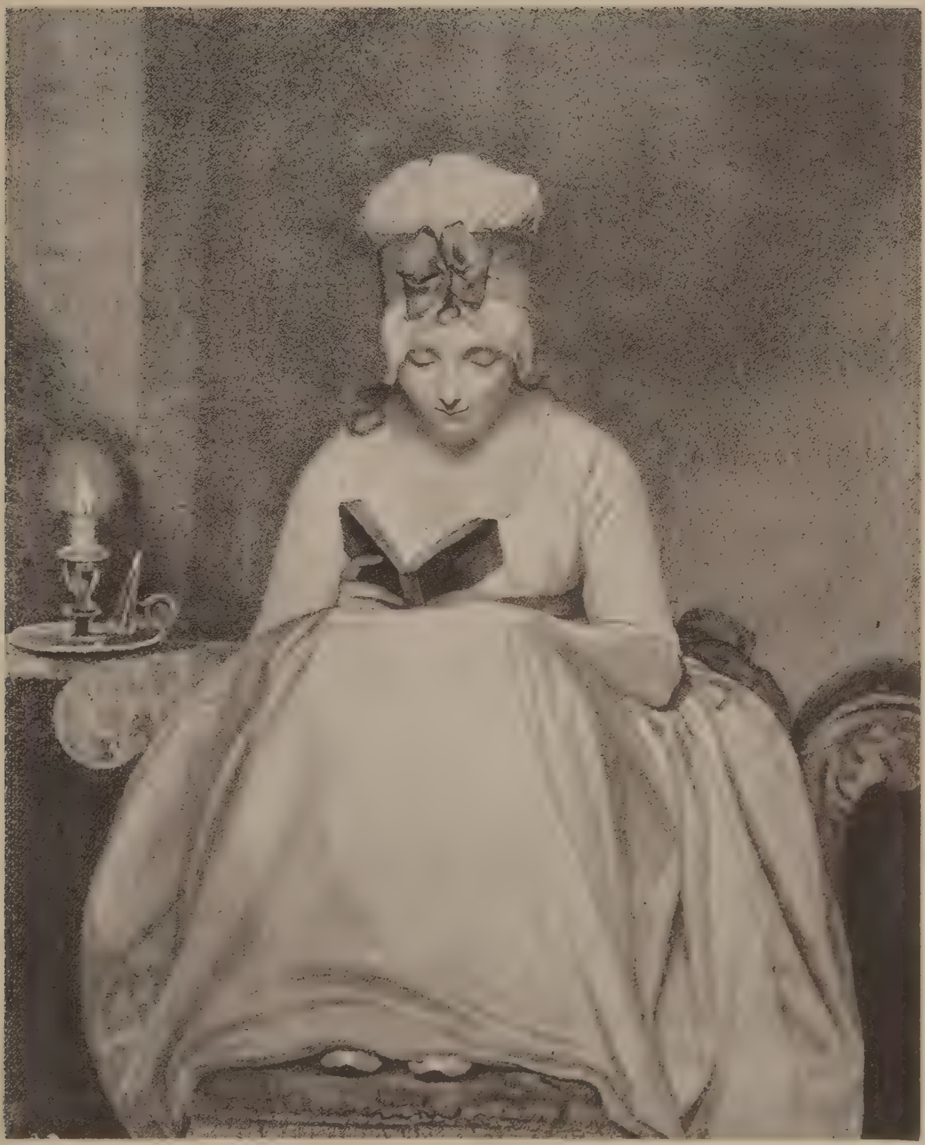
THERE are two reasons, might not one say, why it commonly happens to an artist that some one model gets possession of his imagination, and fills his art with the same set of features perpetually recurring in new aspects and characters. It happens for one reason, when the artist has had within himself an ideal of a special cast—an imagined perfection which is the perfection of some definite singularity he has seen by glimpses in life or in his dreams—and when at last he actually encounters that singularity in its perfection, the real which corresponds to that ideal. Such a groping, and presently such a discovery, by which his genius found its *Ahnung* (as the Germans say) fulfilled, seems to have been Lionardo's case for one; for, long before he had met the Gioconda, we may see him feeling and working towards a type like hers—the lofty forehead, the intellectual smile, the Sibylline subtlety, the nameless treachery in sweetness. The same thing happens for another reason, when the artist encounters one of those creatures who are like embodied beauty, without any sharp intellectual or spiritual character of their own, and who at the same time have that mercurial trick of throwing themselves at will into the semblances of moods and passions not theirs. Such are the born mimics, the born models. Upon the beauty, which is all they themselves are, they will wear fifty successive characters which are not themselves, nor yet deception, but natural personation. Let a painter encounter a woman of that kind, and with her, unless it is wholly preoccupied already, you are likely to see his imagination possessed—with her his work taken up.

'But,' says the reader, 'what of the ascendancy love gives over the imagination? Does not a painter usually fill his canvases with the face of the woman he loves? And if that is the simple secret of the matter, why go on about your ideal who is perfection in singularity, and your other ideal who is perfection in variety? Why prate of anything else but the old story of all?' Well, that is an interesting aspect of the question; and, of course, Love has a way of mixing himself up in these selections. But perhaps he is apt to come after rather than before the selection itself; perhaps the artist's selection of a ruling model is apt, in the first place, to be a matter of artistic feeling and the perceptions, however much, in the second place, and under encouraging circumstances, it is likely to turn into a matter of passionate feeling and the affections. That is the order which reason, as well as the facts of artists' lives when we can get at them, would chiefly seem to point to. If so, we may fairly leave love out of the question, and hold to our observation upon the two ways in which, according as it answers to one definite preconceived ideal, or according as it shows capabilities for personating fifty ideals in turn, a single model of beauty may come to govern an artist's genius. And so we may resume——

Emma Lyon, the Flintshire servant-girl, the London lady's maid—presently the victim of a navy captain—presently the toy of a Hampshire squire—presently the undraped Goddess of Health in the quack doctor's show—presently Emma Harte, the mistress of Charles Greville — presently Emma Lady Hamilton, the wife of the British Minister at the court of Naples, with the British Admiral for her slave and lover—was a painter's model according the latter of our two types. She was as much the most accomplished of mimics as the most beautiful of women born, and as little of anything else. Her singing, her acting, her posing, her fascination, her acquirements in art, life, and diplomacy, her faults as well as virtues, were just those that come of an infinite and unencumbered talent for self-adaptation, a power of what we have called personation hampered by no strong original personality. I say her faults as well as virtues, because in the worst things that are alleged against her—the part she took in the rigours following the suppression of the revolution in Naples, and her influence upon Nelson in matters like the execution of Caracciolo—because in these, I think, there is not the least sign of native ferocity or badness; only an instinctive adaptation of herself to the sentiments of the victorious and vindictive Queen and Court who at that time gave the atmosphere to her life. Nay, of the two, it was her virtues that were the more original—her virtue of kindly remembering in prosperity those who had been her companions in adversity, her virtue of constantly and kindly cherishing her mother, her virtue of general goodwill, so far as we can see, for those she was thrown among. But virtue and vice are hardly words for the case. She lived the life of her temperament. In humble place, she was marked out by radiant and irresistible physical beauty for the career of a Phryne, and by mercurial genius for success in it; she was withheld by no scruples of nature or training from launching herself upon the career, and once launched, by no impediments of an importunate identity from winning in whatever fashion the love and homage of whomsoever she chose—from putting on the guise of every occasion—from entering with perfect dexterity into every situation—from reflecting, and dazzling by the reflection, every circle of which she found herself the centre. Look at the portraits which are supposed to represent her, not in character, but as herself, and see the incredible difference in sentiment and expression. Crowning the same Grecian figure, there is the same foundation of lovely feature; the low, perfectly modelled forehead, upon which the rich rings of hair run riot; the pure immense arch of eyebrow sweeping from the level spring of the short delicate nose; the immense eyes within their exquisitely carved and shaded lids; the mouth of Venus, small with full lips of the richest drawing, always a little open to show the pearls, and ready to pass in an instant from the most lamentable to the blithest sorcery; the ravishing and faultless oval line of cheek and chin. But as to the expression—anon, in an early etching after De Non, it seems a countenance of a quite dull and depraved sensuality, of the Parisian cast; anon, in any one of Romney's portraits, it is all entrancing sweetness and animation; anon, in Madame Vigée Lebrun's portrait of her as a sibyl, it is grave devotion and rapt communing; anon, in Masquerier's portrait of her after Nelson's death (but by this time she was growing stout, and the artist had need to idealise in more ways than one) it is the melancholy of a mourning Muse, sitting with streaming hair and classic profile at a casement, and gazing out upon moonlit waters. All this, I say, when she was not trying to be anything but herself: for the varieties when she is painted, as Romney usually painted her, in specified dramatic characters, are amazing and almost innumerable. In the biography of Romney by his son, twenty-three pictures of her are counted; but these seem to be only the finished ones, and the half finished he could never have counted, or the less than half, in which the rings of hair, the brows, the eyes, the sorceress smile, the pure oval so familiar to the tracing hand, have been merely struck in with two colours of the palette, clear lights and warm shadows of flesh, on a preparation of warm brown. These are suppliant, awe-stricken Mirandas; they are controlling Circes; they are Cassandras raving in denunciation, or Maenads in joyous riot; they are warrior-eyed Pucelles, or embodied Sensibilities with all the soft emotions at tremble in the hands and lips; they are Cecilias or Magdalens, heavenly Aspirations, or contrite Delights the more cajoling for their remorse.

It is uncertain (as we said) at what precise date this brilliant figure and face came to light up the canvases of Romney, and to give his imagination—which without such help was apt to remain in the state of a desire to imagine—the stand-by of an ideal reality so versatile and so commodious. Neither is it certain what were his precise relations with his model. Romney the son, indeed, asserts that she was first brought to sit to his father in the year 1782,—when she would have been a year or two over twenty, and the titular mistress of Charles Greville,—and that Romney's relations to her were never anything but those of respectful, nay, paternal regard mingled with artistic admiration. Common report, however, has said differently, and put her introduction into Romney's studio immediately after her exhibition as the Goddess Hygieia, and earlier than her settled relation with Charles Greville. However that may be, it is certain that during the whole six years through which that relation subsisted, and subsequently when she was in England after her surrender by the nephew Greville, and her marriage with the uncle, Sir William Hamilton—say roughly, for the ten best years of Romney's art and of his life, from 1782 to 1792—the lady's sittings continued to be his best inspiration as a painter, while they were also (as the biographer points out) her own best education as an actress. The correspondence of Hayley with Romney contains plenty of allusions to her—especially at a crisis, towards the end of this period, when the painter in his nerves and his morbid sensibility had fancied himself slighted by 'the divine lady'—but, according to the scrupulously roundabout and superfine fashion of the time and the persons, the allusions are in language of a kind that gives no real clue to life.

From the haunting, then, the recurrence, of this single and governing loveliness, Romney's art derives at least one of the spells by which it is entitled to hold posterity, and one also by which it is alone among the art of his contemporaries. The other aspect, under which we called it worth posterity's while to look at Romney attentively, is that in which he stands with reference to the principal tendencies of our school as it surrounded him. He is both portrait-painter and history-painter. Portrait-painting is the thing which our school then did best, and as well as it ever was done in the world. History-painting is the thing in which it did less well, nay, with a very few exceptions, did as poorly as it ever was done in the world. Romney was a portrait-painter who, like many others of the time, longed most of all to be a history-painter; and who actually was a history-painter to the extent of finishing a handful of historical pictures, beginning a multitude, and conceiving them in number as the sands of the sea. Though works of this kind actually achieved fill a scarcely greater proportion in his total than in the total of Reynolds, the idea of them fills a vastly greater proportion in his mind and life. With Reynolds they were acknowledged experiments; with



GIRL READING.

BY THE MECHANICAL AUTOTYPE PROCESS, FROM AN ENG[illegible]

ROMNEY.

Romney they were the matters of real importance and real ambition. So that his place is midway between the portrait-painters and the history-painters; and he ought to be compared on the one hand with Reynolds, the portrait-painter *par excellence*, and on the other with men who were history-painters *par excellence*, as West, Barry, Fuseli, or the weaker Mortimer or Hamilton. Upon such comparison, my point about him is, that he represents the Reynolds tendency in our school at a level considerably lower than its best—that tendency which was so native, so beautiful at its best, so perfectly successful; and that he represents the other tendency—that tendency which was more factitious, more embarrassed, more apt to fail—at a level considerably higher than, I do not say its lowest, but its usual and current level among our historical painters.

In portrait, I say, Romney is the inferior of Reynolds and Gainsborough. The sentiment of the age, and of the looks of its men, women, and children, which so profoundly penetrated and so completely transfused the art of those two, yet so differently according to the genius of each—that sentiment had affected Romney, and gives his portrait art the charm which is its own; but it had not fully penetrated the art or transfused it. The hand seems heavy, the inspiration slack, beside a first-rate piece of either of the other two; the last touch, the most intimate expression of the sentiment, the fine efflorescence of its grace, dexterity, dignity, or poetry, are wanting. It is not the difference of haste in production—not the over-hurry, whereby added to congenital desultoriness there is almost always something left unfinished and void in a picture of Romney's; not that, but a general falling short in exquisiteness. To bring what I mean to a point,—there are in the present exhibition at Burlington House a picture by Romney and a picture by Reynolds, hung not far apart. One—the Romney—represents a lady and child and spaniel, and is an excellent example of his manner; the other—the Reynolds—represents a lady and a spaniel of the same breed. and is an excellent example of his. Well, the Romney is a charming picture. It is painted with rapid ease in light tones of cool blue and pink; it is pleasant in feeling; the boy looks up with pretty affection to his mother, and in his left hand holds, prettily, the muzzle of the spaniel dog. There is the sweet English family sentiment of the time; there is a bright, accomplished, and easy art. And yet you feel that neither the lady nor the dog, least of all the child, have that intimate perfection, that subtle and extreme charm of individuality in grace, that last fineness and flower which you are accustomed to in the very best works of the time. You feel that at once; and then you go to the Reynolds near by, and have the chance of verifying your impression. You see a lady, with the same kind of white and yellow spaniel caressing her knees; you see no child—the very object at which you know Reynolds to have been greatest; but yet you realise the difference. There, talent and brightness, here, genius and perfection. Here, a rich harmony of golden and creamy white for colour; a sentiment eluding language by its high brilliancy and exquisiteness; a seeming careless touch here and sweep there, yet all so perfectly studied—a touch in the light locks of down about the lady's neck, a sweep in the curl of the dog's coat, a fine shade in his expression or the gesture of his paw, which makes you feel as if the other lady and the other dog were of wood, and as if this difference between excellence and perfection, talent and genius—call it what you will—were the one vast and vital difference in all the world.

That is a handy and complete case in point. And any student taking opportunities to compare Romney with Reynolds, or Romney with Gainsborough, will be able to carry out the comparison much farther still. He has neither the glowing golden harmonies which were the ordinary aim of Reynolds in colour, nor the shimmering silver ones which were the ordinary aim of Gainsborough; his colour is gay and pleasing, but shallow and trivial (most especially in the matter of whites) by comparison. He has neither the beautifully suave and rhythmic composition that Reynolds has when he really studies composition of line; nor the vivacious and spirited composition which Gainsborough has. His composition, on the contrary, is apt to have a certain ungainliness and want of rhythmic instinct, even in his most careful efforts, as in the fine engraved picture of the children of the Stafford family dancing, or the Warwick family picture now also in Burlington House. In individuals, he has the sense of character, of dignity, and, emphatically, the sense of beauty; but he has them all in a demonstrably secondary degree by comparison with the real kings of portrait, with Reynolds and Gainsborough.

Turning now to Romney's position in historical and imaginative art:—what he has to, be judged by are the Shakspeare pictures, the *Milton*, the *Newton*, the several *Titanias*, the drawings at Cambridge and the cartoons at Liverpool. He shared, we have said, the desire of almost all the artists of that time, their desire to be, if they only could, great historical and imaginative painters. He inspired himself, like the rest of them, chiefly from the English poets from Shakspeare and Milton. And that is a special note of the high art of the age, which must not be lost sight of by any one making it his study. The high art of the eighteenth century in England was, before all things, a development, a magnifying and extension of its illustrative art. The sublime and poetical ideas, which the more ambitious painters of the age were bent upon realising, were ideas that came to them through and from literature; not ideas current in the general imagination, and fit, like the ideas of the Middle Age, to inspire both art and literature, although at the same time, yet independently; but ideas that had no currency except a literary one. An undertaking like Boydell's famous 'Shakspeare Gallery' is a central symptom in the culture of an age. The things in the age, of which it is the symptom, are—artists full of ambition to excel in the higher kinds of art, but without the native imagination which inspirits a school of art of the higher kind, and therefore constrained to vent their ambition by the direct illustration of an inspiriting—a higher—literature; a public disbelieving in native inspiration, and unready to buy 'fancy' pictures, although ready to buy engravings after them as illustrations of native literature; enterprising tradesmen anxious to turn to account these two peculiarities of artists and the public, and to encourage the ambition of the one while providing for the tastes of the other.

Of this undertaking, in which commercial enterprise went hand in hand with patriotic enthusiasm, and both with the advancement of an illustrative or literary order of high art, Romney—the 'ardent' Romney—was claimed by his friends as the original proposer. At any rate, he was one of its most ardent supporters, until after a while he found, or thought he found, that commercial considerations had too much the upper hand in its conduct. And the large pictures he did for it, the *Tempest*, the *Infant Shakspeare attended by the Passions*, are those by which his high art has principally to be judged in comparison with the high art of his contemporaries. This is not the place for a comparative criticism of the Shakspeare Gallery, nor yet (since we are coming to that hereafter) of high art as it was practised by those leading official representatives, West, Fuseli, and Barry. But what we may do, in connexion with Romney (and it will help us presently when we come to the others), is to define to ourselves generally the qualities which the literary English high art of that age aimed at. In plain language, we may say that it aimed at the sublime and terrible; that it aimed also at the classical and abstract; and that it aimed, thirdly, at the tender and graceful. The union of those three virtues was its pictorial ideal—and evidently a very good ideal. But in its search for the sublime and terrible it fell short, because its desire was out of proportion to its power, and still more out of proportion to its knowledge. To entertain both intellectual ideas of the sublime and terrible from poetry and literature, and visible images of the sublime and terrible from painting and sculpture—to entertain both these and to be on fire with them, is not yourself to have the power of putting the two together; to admire Milton and be enraptured before Michelangelo, is not to illustrate Milton with design like Michelangelo's. It was the mistake of these men to think enthusiasm would do it, in other words, to take desire for power. And it was also their mistake to underrate the necessity of knowledge, of the laborious and combined and accumulated processes of schooling and study, which are necessary before a Michelangelo can arise to give his imaginations the true forms of sublimity and terror. Failing those processes, and in an epoch not trained in them, the effort at the sublime and terrible makes itself in vain, and leaves to posterity the painful spectacle of ambitious impotence. And ambitious impotence, in that part of its striving, is too apt to be the character of the eighteenth-century high art. If we want to find the real note of grandeur struck in the art of the century, we must look for it, not in any of the official masters of painting, but in the designer Blake, the unofficial and neglected. By some strange original endowment, by a brain teeming with mighty visions, by communing with the vague and suggestive rather than with the definite imagery of grandeur in literature, Blake arrived at a real presentation of the sublime and terrible, nay, a magnificent and intense presentation of them, although often enfeebled, even his, with want of knowledge and schooling. Romney's chief efforts at the sublime and terrible are in the unfinished drawings and cartoons. He hardly strikes the true note; and yet he is nearer striking it than most of his contemporaries. The drawings and cartoons being unpublished, it is no use referring to them; but the *Tempest* is well known; and so are the *Passions* that surround the infant Shakspeare; and so is *Cassandra.* The composition in the *Tempest* is quite bad (but then it had been altered in progress, in deference to injudicious advice)—Prospero with Miranda huddled in their cave, and cut off by a mere slice of rock from an unreal sea; an impossible ship in distress, so close that Prospero could touch it with his hand, carrying a crowd of muscular models idly bustling and gesticulating, with Ferdinand who is in a wild state of '*horripilation,*' as the French say, and prepares for the plunge despite a cloud of baffling drapery. Little true sublimity or terror in that. But the *Passions* are better: here the composition has something really fine; it is not mere impotence, and ineffectual striving. But it is not complete power. The finest figures are Joy and Envy; but in Joy there is a clear reminiscence of Michelangelo's Medici monument, in Envy of Cibber's Bedlam gateway; Fear repeats the affrighted hair of Ferdinand; this Passion shows an excited caricature of anatomical, and that of physiognomical science. The *Cassandra* is really the most satisfactory of the tragic things, for it is a single figure, and Lady Hamilton has put on the character well,—as indeed, whether it is the sublime and terrible, whether it is the classical and abstract, whether it is the tender and graceful, the face and inspiration of that enchantress are at all moments needed to lift Romney to his best self.

The next object of research, for the age's high art, we have said was the classical and abstract. To neglect details, to attend to the main impression, to put in what was essential and leave what was accidental, to be restrained and simple—that was part of the age's artistic doctrine, and to a great extent of its instincts also. Reynolds' *Discourses* give the doctrine its fullest exposition; almost all the art of the age, as well as his, betray the instinct. But here again, insufficient knowledge comes in to mar. For the real abstraction, the real severity, can only be practised by men who are perfect masters, who could do every detail perfectly if they chose, but do not choose, but leave out deliberately and consciously. A false abstraction and a false severity are apt to be practised by men who are not perfect masters, who avoid details and the accidental because they could not do them well, and allow themselves in vacuity and lax baldness under the plea of severity and abstraction. Vacuity and lax baldness, it is too true, are often the real words for the qualities intended by the eighteenth-century painters to stand for classic reserve and monumental simplicity. And Romney, it must be confessed, is not the strongest of his countrymen in this particular. His work has very strongly the mark of the simple or abstract style; but the mark comes to it, and especially in his larger heroic works, too often by neglect or impotence, too seldom by fine instinct or deliberate restraint. The person in the century who is really most to be praised in this matter, is Flaxman, and I do not mean principally Flaxman in sculpture, which is necessarily a severe and restricted art, but Flaxman in his drawings and slight studies, which do show the finest instinct of doing thus much and no more, coupled with the fullest power to do abundantly more had he chosen. In Romney, to whom as a young man he owed much kindness, Flaxman himself singles out this quality of severe artistic generalisation for express and particular praise; but, so far as it is a strong and not a weak quality, Flaxman is all the while Romney's master at it ten times over.

In the third virtue, in tenderness with grace, the age is altogether strong. It scarcely ever goes wrong there, except in so far as it lets its native and most sincere grace and tenderness be sugared over, from the example of Cipriani and suchlike aliens, with a grace and tenderness that are foreign and affected. Romney had quite enough of the native and sincere virtue not to have needed to borrow more of it—as try to borrow more he did—from a foreigner even of Correggio's standing. We might hold by our clue, and say that not even of this virtue was the full perfection found in any of the historic and imaginative art of the time. In the portraits of Reynolds of course it was found in full perfection; but in fancy work, only in that of Stothard, a designer whom for his pre-eminence in this it is natural to place beside Blake and Flaxman for their pre-eminence in those other matters of the sublime and terrible, the classical and abstract respectively. But to say that in this place is to sacrifice too much to our clue, and to symmetry. Let Romney have the full benefit of his grace and tenderness, which are constant, winning, and high, though not absolutely the highest, both in his portrait and his fancy work.

And let us turn to an example of him which shows him at his very best, holding out a hand to Reynolds by the perfection of tender grace in portraiture, and to Flaxman by the perfection of monumental symmetry and simplicity. Our *Girl Reading* (after a somewhat weak and stippled engraving by Jones) is such an example. See the simple pyramid she makes, sitting on the solitary sofa with her feet tucked up on a high stool, and the dress falling in a great plain surface over her knees on to the pretty peeping toes of her shoes; the elbows resting on the knees, the body bowed over the book, the delicate bowed features and sweet eyebrows drooped for reading; the great tall mob-cap, a tower on the top of the pyramid, the lovely little rings of hair symmetrically escaping, one in the middle and one or two at each side; the delicate whiteness and virginity; the gravity in charm, the sweetness in reserve.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

MR. MASON'S COLLECTED WORKS.

IT is seldom that the public have such an opportunity as the liberality of the Burlington Club has just afforded to Londoners of studying the gifts of an artist in the fullest manifestation they attained; perhaps, if such opportunities came oftener, we should find that there are not many artists who have grown so much and changed so little as Mr. Mason—who have gained richness and depth, and yet have held fast all the while by one subtle, simple charm. All his pictures seem expositions of the infinite phases of a single mood; we are kept sometimes in cool dimness, sometimes in bright calm, sometimes in hushed peace, often in the thrilling awe of twilight, but always under the spell of an unbroken solitude, in the midst of the life of nature, which is not the life of the world. Whether it is the life of tree and sky alone, or the life of dumb creatures and of country people too, the solitude is never troubled; they are all spirits of the place together, and we do not resent their intrusion as if they were akin to ourselves. And it is not only that his pictures are full of the soul of the country; he always took the country at its simplest, and that is what gives them such a singleness of charm; what he painted is never what town's-people go out into the country to see, but what those whose eyes are fresh see in the country when they are there;—not the sweep of country over which we look from the hill-top, but the tangle of the hill-side, and the ragged fir-trees against the sky; not the broad river winding through rich meadows among stately trees, but the little brook with the sedges. And as he drew inexhaustible inspiration from a limited class of simple scenes, so he was never weary of caressing the simplest motive, the commonest incident, till it had yielded all its sweetness. Without ever imitating or repeating himself, he loved his inspirations too much to be in a hurry to let them go. The *Wind on the Wolds* is in its subject almost exactly a repetition of the *Mist on the Moors*, and yet it is quite a different picture. The crimsons and purples are keener and fresher; and yet, at least in the second version of the *Wind on the*

Wolds, the gleam of the pool in the distance is almost as mystical as the rich orange base which almost hides it in the *Mist on the Moors.* But the central group, which changes less than its surroundings, has itself a long history. One of the very earliest of the painter's Roman works, the Peasants driving cattle home, with the Castle of Petrella in the distance, already contains the gem of it; one of the strapping women is thrown by the steep path into a prophecy of the *pose*, which is so delightful when an English child falls into it before the moorland gale. There is even an anticipation of the way the line of her figure is completed by the two calves; but for the calves themselves we have to wait,—the grey gaunt beasts of the Campagna are not like the soft pitiful shapes of rich red-brown and white that move across the wold of Staffordshire. We find their first prototype in a purely English picture, which of the English pictures is among the earliest, where two children are carrying a milk-pail, and the two calves, this time unmistakable, are following them with a natural dumb envy in their gait. The creatures are the same, even the way in which the haunches of one group with the back of the other is almost identical; the only difference is, and it is all-important, that the dappled calf is uppermost in the early work, and the white one in the latter. In the large picture of the *Return from Milking*, which the painter was at work upon when he died, there was to have been yet another combination. We should have had three calves instead of two, one red, and one white, and one flecked, or rather stained with red, not dappled. Such perseverance in developing one gracious incident gives a significance to the separate repetition of the figure of the milkmaid in *Only a Shower*, and of the *Return from Ploughing*, which might otherwise have been attributed to a caprice of the painter, or of his client's.

It is hard to analyse the characteristics of what is so subtle, and yet so simple, as Mr. Mason's charm. Perhaps the two things that strike us most as running through all his works are the feeling for grace and dignity of attitude, and the feeling for twilight, and for all the half-lights of which twilight is the crown, as sunset is the crown of all the sunlight of the day.

His sketches, which are more than twice as numerous as the completed works exhibited at the Burlington Club, show clearly that both feelings came upon him in Italy; but in his completed works for some time we see most traces of the former. There are no pictures founded on such sketches as *Near Nettuno*, and *In the Gardens of the Villa Pamfili Doria*, or the *Gardens of the Villa Borghese*, or *An Italian Landscape, Evening*, though there is a weird little picture, called a *View in the Campagna*, a sandy road gleaming between grey willows that sway under a dim sky, which has a sort of distant affinity to the last; only the picture is colder than the sketch, the twilight is leaden instead of livid purple. The fact is, that the Roman peasantry, with their gaudy costumes, and their pronounced features, and their high colouring, were not the kind of subjects with which a shrinking, tender painter would naturally sympathise. They carried themselves too well, they grouped too effectively with ruins and buffaloes, not to be utilised; but they were utilised in a deliberate external sort of way. Such pictures as *Nelle Maremme* and *Watering-place in the Campagna*, are very far from being the most masterly things that Mr. Mason ever painted, but they are very much the most academical. It was not so much that the *ars celare artem* had not come, but that the subject did not harmonise with the natural impressions which in his later work subdued the art when it was at its strongest, and sustained it when the hand was weaker than the eye. The vigorous picturesque animals, quadrupeds and bipeds alike, are painted thoroughly and effectively in the rich conventional glow of the Italian noon or the Italian evening (one has only to compare the brown, shabby shepherd of the sketch, with his brilliant counterpart in the picture of the *Watering-place*, to make sure that the glow is conventional); but they are not admitted into the sanctuary of the twilight.

Perhaps there may have been another reason. The twilight itself hardly held its own among all the splendours of Rome and the grandiose desolation which surrounds it: even an artist who found it more attractive than other things would hardly find it more characteristic; and as the peasants and cattle were undeniably characteristic, and suited Mr. Mason, with his love for animals, better than the broken aqueducts, he made most of his first pictures out of them. But when he came home to Staffordshire, to the broken moors and rocks of Wetley, with their rugged, stunted, weather-beaten copses, there was nothing to distract him any more. He could give himself up at ease to all the soft influences of the gloaming; he could plunge into that strange atmosphere where shadows have most substance, and substances seem the shadows, or rather where earth and sky are seen through some mysterious medium, of which both seem to be a part. The difference between what we see of things and what we know of them is never greater than among trees when such a light is gleaming through them, as it is never less than when the sun has set in a sky not merely unclouded but clear, and half round the horizon everything stands out in massy distinctness. This effect seldom tempted Mr. Mason, though in the second version of the *Return from Ploughing* his object seems to have been to study the changes in his composition which were needed when it was to be seen, not under a warm dusky glow, but by a clear pale light; and the obvious charm and solemnity of cloudless evening has seldom been given better than in the sketch of the Borghese Gardens. Perhaps his choice was one of the limits of his popularity: many who could not appreciate his exquisite tenderness of tone, his perfect keeping, his delicious harmonies of greens and purples, could exaggerate the want of definition and solidity, which was the defect to which he exposed himself most. Not only in an early work like *Wetley Rocks*, but in such a gem as *St. Mary's Lake*, truth of medium is attained by what to an untrained eye looks like a complete sacrifice of truth of texture,—the sky, and the trees, and the ground all seem to be spongy together. Even in such pearly daylight as surrounds the *Children Fishing*, or the little girl who is jumping in *Catch* at the apple her brother throws her, one would be hardly surprised to find that the rounded figures melted at a touch, they look as soft as the atmosphere which bathes them. As we said before, we know more than we see; though we are unreasonable when we look in a painting less for what we see than what we know, perhaps it might be possible to paint more of what we know under what we see, more at least of what we see second under what we see first. But probably the defect, so far as there is one, is really in the eye; at least, it is significant that the best passages of the best photographs, with something of Mr. Mason's depth and softness of tone, have all his indistinctness of texture.

The most characteristic of his single pictures, the one in which we see most aspects of his genius at their culminating point, is *The Ganders*. There we have in the girl's figure the perfection of homely grace, though she is only trying to scare the ganders while she is half scared herself; and we have the perfection of the passion of twilight brought to a focus in the marvellous glow of the sky reflected in the pool. (It is remarkable, by-the-by, that in so many of the pictures we find the same use made of water, to give a deeper, richer brilliancy of light than we are allowed to perceive elsewhere.) There is another point noticeable about this same picture and many others, they are charged with passion and sentiment; but the passion and sentiment do not centre in the human figure: indeed one might say that the faces and pinafores of the girls in *Gathering Blackberries* have just the same kind of value as the clothes spread to dry in the picture of *Matlock*, they serve to strike the notes which are wanted for the scale of colour, and that is all.

In *Catch* and the *Cast Shoe*, the figures are the key not only to the arrangement but to the feeling of the picture, though in *Catch* the feeling is not too deep to be expressed by an incident as trifling as it is pleasant. In *Catch* too, and in one or two other pictures (*e.g. The Unwilling Playmate*), there is a just perceptible hankering after the refinement of colouring and delicacy of features which an out-of-door life must inevitably efface among all country children. But in the three largest and most ambitious of his mature compositions one cannot say that there is any false prettiness, or that the dignity of treatment is at all in excess of the dignity of subject. The often-studied *Girls Dancing by the Sea* is faultlessly beautiful at last; all the exquisitely varied rhythm of tree and shore leads up to the simple grace of the two girlish figures, which in themselves are such as might be seen in any corn-field that overlooks the sea. It is thankless to wish for more; and yet, lovely as it is, one fancies that the loveliness is empty. After all they are only children, and they are only dancing: that is not a reflection that strikes us in looking at Greek or Venetian work of similar character; but after all English peasant nature is not deep enough, at all events not rich enough, or bright enough, when we take it on its ordinary level, to make the mere joy of living a wonder and a mystery. It is only in the *Evening Hymn* and the *Harvest Moon* that the passion of the figures rises to a level with the passion of the landscape, and therefore we should be inclined to say that it is in these two pictures only that the painter found an adequate outlet for his highest inspiration. It is really a secondary question how far the maidens or the harvesters were capable of the passion of which they are made the organs. Nature lets us study her moods long enough to correct imagination by observation, but it is otherwise with the moods of man: we must be content if the faces in a picture really made the painter feel what they express; this is the only standard of ideal truth which it is possible to apply. Tried by this standard, the foremost line at any rate of the figures which come up singing out of the sunset before the shepherds abiding in the fields, may be pronounced scrupulously true in conception. Everything we can test is accurate; the shabby print pinafores and handkerchiefs, the blurred brown faces under the shapeless sun-bonnets,—all that we have to take on trust is the rapture in which one floats along, the awe with which another catches her breath and looks up, while her companions cling to her in loving wonder at the transfiguration. As we penetrate further into the picture, we seem to catch traces of eclecticism; the lovers, with the white rose flaming on the maiden's breast, are just perceptibly romantic, and the mother with her baby further back seems as if she had been taken up into poetry out of the pastoral painting of the eighteenth century. But these things do not mar the general impression; we feel on the whole, in spite of technical difficulties imperfectly subdued, that, so far as English country life still has a spiritual side at all, we have the realised ideal of it here.

In the *Harvest Moon* there is more variety of feeling and less elevation; perhaps, because there is less intensity we fancy there is less sincerity: the handsome stripling who is carrying the fiddle ought to woo more earnestly under such a sky; the placid beauty at his side ought to have something deeper and more inward in her content; the splendid sturdy group in front of two reapers and a gleaner carry themselves too much as if gymnastics had been naturalised in the shires; the men at any rate walk as if they had never tramped through ploughed fields in heavy boots. But in the centre group at the gate we have the very soul of harvest-tide—glad, loving, triumphant weariness: the very baby is proud of having been out harvesting all day, the mother can only march on mechanically, while the husband as he props open the gate looks up at her with a face that is almost too chivalrous.

It is difficult to say what will be the permanent rank of a painter whose loftiest pictures were among his incompletest; but posterity will certainly be passing a very severe judgment on contemporary art if it remembers Mr. Mason rather as the painter of the *Ganders* and the *Wind on the Wolds* than as the painter of the *Harvest Moon* and the *Evening Hymn:* the latter, if we have a religious art at all, will surely be counted one of the greatest of our religious pictures.

G. A. Simcox.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

PREFACE.

IN order to give more unity to these chapters I have decided, after some hesitation, to introduce one or two fictitious personages and an element of human interest. Whatever Nature may be from the strictly scientific point of view, it is interesting to the artist (whether literary or pictorial) mainly as it is related, in ways more or less mysterious, to the world of feeling which lies hidden within our own breasts. Therefore, although a man of science might have written about the forest without reference to human sorrows or satisfactions, an artist could not do so except at the risk of sacrificing his most effective forces, those which have influence by means of sympathy and association. The principal personage of the narrative was in some degree suggested by the 'Obermann' of De Sénancour, a creation which has been, if not precisely popular, certainly very influential amongst the more sensitive and studious minds of continental Europe during the earlier part of the present century, and which has not even at the present day altogether lost its attraction; for 'Obermann' is still read by persons of culture, though the mental condition which De Sénancour painted in that work is much rarer in these days than it was in the days of René and Childe Harold. The fictitious personage who tells what there is of story in 'The Sylvan Year' is, however, a conception quite distinct from the dissatisfied hero of De Sénancour, and is intended to leave a very different impression upon the reader. The dominant note of 'Obermann' is *ennui;* the *ennui* of a character capable of long, indefinite suffering, but not capable of passing out of such suffering by the discipline of active sight and thought. The following narrative, so far as it paints the character of the imaginary narrator, is intended rather to exhibit the value of external nature as a refreshment to a spirit which, though it has suffered greatly, has still strength enough to take a hearty and healthy interest in everything that comes within the circle of its observation.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER the long agony of a war that was never brightened by one victory, came for us, the unhappy inhabitants of the provinces annexed by the conqueror, the final bitterness of a forced choice between the dear land that gave us birth and the freedom that was still more dear. So powerful are the ties that bind us to the native soil, so strong is the force of life-long habit, that even the love of freedom itself might have been insufficient to detach me from our beloved Lorraine, but for one over-mastering consideration. My wife, whose health had been delicate for years, died in our town-house in Metz, from the effects of privation and anxiety, just when the siege was over and there was a prospect of more tranquil days. My two elder sons were both sacrificed in the carnage of Gravelotte, and but one child remained to me—my youngest boy, Alexis. For myself, who am past the time for compulsory military service, it might have been a possible ending of a saddened life to linger a few years about the ruins of my home and the graves of my nearest kindred; and I might have become so indifferent to the distinctions of the world as to endure even the name of Prussian with resignation. But there was one thing that I could *not* endure, the thought that the boy who remained to me would become a soldier in the armies of our conqueror, and probably, in a not very distant future, bear arms against his countrymen. The lot of his two brothers, dead on the field of honour, seemed enviable in comparison with this.

I decided then, without hesitation, to preserve our nationality at the cost of what was relatively exile. The change of residence was, however, rendered considerably easier for me by the possession of an hereditary estate at a distance from the new German frontier. In the heart of the forests between the vine-lands of Burgundy and the course of the river Loire my mother's family had for centuries possessed a property which had descended to myself, but which I had visited only on rare occasions. It required singularly little care from its proprietor, being nearly the whole of it forest-land, and the cuttings took place only once in twenty years. The estate had been divided into five portions, and the times of cutting had been so arranged that one such period should recur every fourth year; so we came to the place each Leap-year, like the 29th of February. There were about four hundred acres of woodland, and it would be difficult to find, except on the slopes of the Alps, a similar extent of country with so little that was level. Seven miles from the nearest public road stood our ancestral habitation. It occupied the bottom of a little valley, and had for its title the name of the locality, *le Val Sainte Véronique.* The house was not a *château,* nor was it (I rejoice to say) an ordinary *maison bourgeoise.* It consisted of the remains of a monastic establishment which had never been either extensive or splendid, but our religious predecessors had left upon the place that which suits my taste and temper better than either size or splendour—the impress of a quiet feeling, in harmony with the perfect seclusion that reigned there from year to year. They had left, too, a lovely chapel of perfect fourteenth-century work, which had been used by the farmer as a barn, and so little injured (for the soft hay did no harm to the delicate sculpture), that when I restored it some years since the walls and vaults required nothing but a careful cleaning, and the only serious outlay was that for a new pavement and the repair of the external roof. The monastic buildings provided a capacious residence for one of my tenants, and a house for my own family; but, as our visits had been so rare, we had gone to no expense in luxuries, and the furniture consisted of a few old things that had been left there by my maternal forefathers, who were people of simple tastes. Beyond the repair of the chapel, which had not been costly, I had laid out scarcely anything on these old buildings in the Val Sainte Véronique, but I thought of them always with a certain quiet affection, and sought their shelter willingly in the time of my deepest sorrow, going to that secluded place with a half-religious feeling, as if its monastic associations invited me, and made the retreat more perfect and its tranquillity more serene.

I have said that the buildings were situated in a little valley. Three tiny meadows occupied the bottom, like a carpet of greenest velvet, and in the midst of them flowed a stream, about four yards wide, whose water was of the most lucid purity, and abundant even in the fiercest heats of summer. The hills around were so steep that they derived some sublimity from their steepness, but they were not exceedingly lofty, the highest of them not rising to more than seven hundred feet above the stream's level. Entirely clothed with wood, they offered an appearance of great richness, especially in the golden weeks of autumn, when the little valley became, for a brief season, a glorious study for a landscape-painter.

When we came to the place—my boy and I—after the lamentable events of the war, it had not this temporary splendour, but was grey under a grey and rainy sky; and it seemed better so, more in unison with the sadness of our hearts. Our first visit was to the chapel, which, when we had last stayed here, my wife had decorated with some delicate needle-work of her own; and here, as we knelt together, my boy and I had leisure to feel both the nearness of our lost ones and their remoteness. We chose two rooms that communicated with each other, and, before evening, had given them an appearance of tolerable comfort. This can never be very difficult in a place where fire-wood is inexhaustibly abundant. Logs were heaped on the old rusty fire-dogs, and the most cheerful beams illuminated the red-brick floor and the naked, inhospitable walls. That night the good fire sufficed for us, but the next day we busied ourselves very actively in furnishing our little apartment with the least inconvenient of the old things that were scattered about the mansion. This activity was beneficial to both of us, and I was pleased to see how Alexis suddenly regained his boyish cheerfulness in the toils of this novel occupation. Far from endeavouring to repress this happy elasticity of youth, I did my best to sustain and encourage it, for there is gloom enough between infancy and age without adding anything to it by the wilful refusal of whatever gleams of sunshine may be permitted to us.

We passed a whole day in arranging the two rooms that were to be, in an especial sense, our home, and gradually they came to wear a pleasant and familiar aspect, as we unpacked our luggage and surrounded ourselves with our little personal belongings. We set up some book-shelves, and a rack for my pipes, and another for our fowling-pieces; we hung up, with a melancholy satisfaction, the photographs of those who would come to us no more. The juxtaposition of these details is typical of what was going forward all the time in our innermost thoughts, for whilst we were busy about our things the images of the beloved ones were always near, always ready to rise vividly in the imagination.

I had not come to the Val Sainte Véronique without a definite plan for the employment of our time. Employment is necessary to us all, and in all circumstances, but it is most especially necessary to those who have to bear some poignant and constantly-recurring sorrow. In the solitude that death had made for me, I felt myself drawn nearer to my remaining son, and resolved to have him with me for a whole year in that lonely dwelling of the Val Sainte Véronique. If this arrangement retarded his school-work, there might be, it seemed, an ample compensation in the constant exercise of a beneficent paternal influence, whilst the life he would lead with me was in the highest degree favourable to his physical growth and health. Nor was it inevitable, either, that his studies should be neglected during the months he passed with me. Though quite without ambition, I had employed a life of leisure in maintaining and extending my own culture in various directions, and might reasonably suppose myself capable of teaching what my boy, at his age, could have learned in an ordinary public school. The two disabilities which so commonly make paternal education practically an impossibility, the want of leisure and the want of the necessary scholarship, did not exist in my case. I particularly desired to associate in my boy's mind the love of nature with the love of literature, and art, and science; being firmly convinced, and knowing partly from my own experience, that these pursuits enhance the value of wealth to those who possess it, and are in themselves true riches for many who have little material gold. I determined, therefore, that we would not pass our time in the forests like wild animals, but that all the lights of culture should brighten our sylvan year.

I indulged myself farther, in the hope—though this may have been, to some extent, a common parental illusion (it was not so wholly, however, as the result has proved)—that by the constant but gentle exercise of paternal influence, whatever degree of that influence I already possessed over Alexis might be immensely increased during the year that we were to live together in such close and uninterrupted companionship. It is the misfortune of public education that our sons are separated from us in their youth and delivered into the hands of teachers, who, however conscientious they may be, cannot, in the nature of things, take that earnest and complete interest in their whole mental and physical well-being which incessantly occupies the mind of every father who is worthy of the name. Since this boy alone remained to me, I desired to establish between us relations of intimacy and friendship of a kind which cannot be incompatible with respect on one side and dignity on the other. His brothers had loved me well, and when their life-blood flowed out upon the miry ground at Gravelotte, their last thoughts, so far as they related to anything in this world, were, I doubt not, thoughts of tender affection for their mother and dutiful love for me. I know that they loved me well. There have been times and occasions in our life . . . . .

In vain I school myself into forgetfulness; I cannot quite forget, for all things remind me of my sons. Alexis himself reminds me of them continually, and he is constantly in my sight or in my thoughts. The place, too, recalls them to my memory, for they came here to hunt the boar in the pride of their early manhood. And why should we endeavour to forget? Do we not wrong the dead when we dismiss their memory as too disturbing and importunate? Let me rather welcome these recollections, and be thankful for that clearness of the faculties which enables me still to see their faces and hear their voices as I heard and saw them when the only war they knew was that against the wild boar and the wolf. I will build a monument to their memory near the Val Sainte Véronique. On the crest of the hill before the house two columns of spotless marble shall rise high above the summits of the trees, and as the marble mellows to the sunsets of the years that are to come, so may their sacrifice appear to me more in harmony with the great purposes of the world.

CHAPTER II.

THE day after our arrival in our new home it rained incessantly, and not a ray of sunshine came to brighten the dreary November landscape. We had arrived at a time of the year that offered no prospect of cheering natural appearances. The splendour of autumn had utterly faded away; the clear brightness of the frosty winter had not yet arrived to brace us with its healthier influences; we had nothing around us but the dullness of advanced decay. From sunrise to sunset, or, more accurately in a valley shrouded by mist, from the time when the cloud grew paler in the morning to the time when it grew dark again in the afternoon, we remained in the house together. Our heavy baggage arrived from the distant railway station in the middle of the day, and we found an occupation in unpacking the various cases and in settling our interior arrangements. There was plenty of space in the old building, and, with unlimited supplies of excellent firewood, we were under no necessity for limiting our existence to the apartments we had especially selected as our own. We had *déjeuner* in the dining-room, but it seemed so large and dreary, with its broad stone floor and the black beams in the rude old ceiling, that we determined not to eat in it any more, and dined that evening in a circular cabinet, which occupied the basement of one of the round towers—a cabinet which had been used by a lady of our family two generations before, and had still the charm of a faded elegance that affected the mind like the faint perfume of withered flowers.

I have a fancy which, though based on personal feeling, may be supported by some good reasons,—that it is a great help to the prosecution of our studies to give, when it is practicable, a separate room to each of them. So powerful is the association of ideas, that when we are accustomed to follow one occupation in one place, the place itself will constantly remind us of things that it is important for us (just at that time) to remember. Acting on this principle (it was easy to do so in an empty mansion like that of the Val Sainte Véronique), I took possession of a suite of three good rooms on the upper floor, and dedicated one of them to Literature, another to Science, and the third to Art. These rooms were, in fact, to be so many schools for my dear pupil Alexis, but I secretly resolved that during the months we passed together he should believe and feel that his duties were those of an assistant and secretary rather than an *écolier*.

The German invaders of Lorraine had carried away the greater part of my library and my little collection of pictures. My herbarium, which it had taken me years to collect and classify, had gone I knew not where; possibly some scientific invader may have been tempted by the rarer plants, and appropriated them, leaving the rest to comrades less enlightened, who may have used them to kindle fires. Even the cabinets that contained them disappeared in the general ruin. All that remained to me of my material implements of culture were a few old books; but these, as it fortunately happened, were my dearest friends and favourites. Better editions may have been printed by the enterprise of contemporary publishers, but to my feeling no copy of a beloved author, however fair, however faultless, can ever be worth the copy that has long been my companion. Books increase in value for their possessor as they diminish in saleableness at an auction of his effects. The remnant of what had been the best private library in the neighbourhood I lived in had for me a preciousness far beyond that of the finest editions that were once its glory in the eyes of others. Especially had I loved the true immortal poets. From them, and from them only, can we win that wondrous lore which enchants for us the whole material world, and admits us into a fairyland which is not illusory.

In any modern culture that is approximately perfect—perfect, I mean, in the proportion of its elements, not in extent, for each pursuit is an infirmity in itself and completeness can never be attained—there will be found the three ingredients of science, and literature, and art. The two supremely cultivated men, Da Vinci and Goethe, have each of them united these three cultures, though their natural gifts were different. In the case of Da Vinci, literature had the smallest share and place, in that of Goethe it had the largest. Da Vinci's pursuits were art, science, and literature; the pursuits of Goethe were literature, science, and art. The flag of culture seems to be a tricolor of three primaries, and the perfect light (if it were attainable by mortals) would be the perfect blending of these three. We can never hope for this, but if one of these elements is entirely absent there is a visible shortcoming in our culture. Happily, the access to knowledge of all kinds is easier for us than it was for those who toiled before us in these paths. True science may be had in these days for nothing but the trouble of inquiry, and a patient reference to nature. A student of average endowment may follow the three paths where he will find the footprints of Lionardo and Goethe, and hope, without presumption, to attain their breadth of view.

So, during the year of retirement that lay before us, our work was to have three principal divisions; but all of it was to bear reference to the little world of nature in the centre of which we lived. In literature, my project was to read the noblest poetry and prose in which, from the earliest ages Man has expressed his love and admiration for the beauty of the external world; and I did not forget that in sharing these readings with me, my son and pupil would pleasantly advance in his knowledge of various languages. In science I intended simply to refer everything we might observe during our rambles to the text-books on our shelves at home, and to verify, whenever possible, our readings by a reference to nature. In art the only chance of any result worth striving for lay in the most modest limitation of our aims. I knew too well the enormous difficulties of painting to waste time in fruitless struggles against technical difficulties which it needs an entire lifetime to overcome; but I had attained, in summers of studious amateurship, a degree of proficiency in the art of etching, humble, indeed, in comparison with the wonderful results which that great art has yielded to the will and strength of the master-aquafortists, yet sufficient for a legible record of what interested me most in nature.

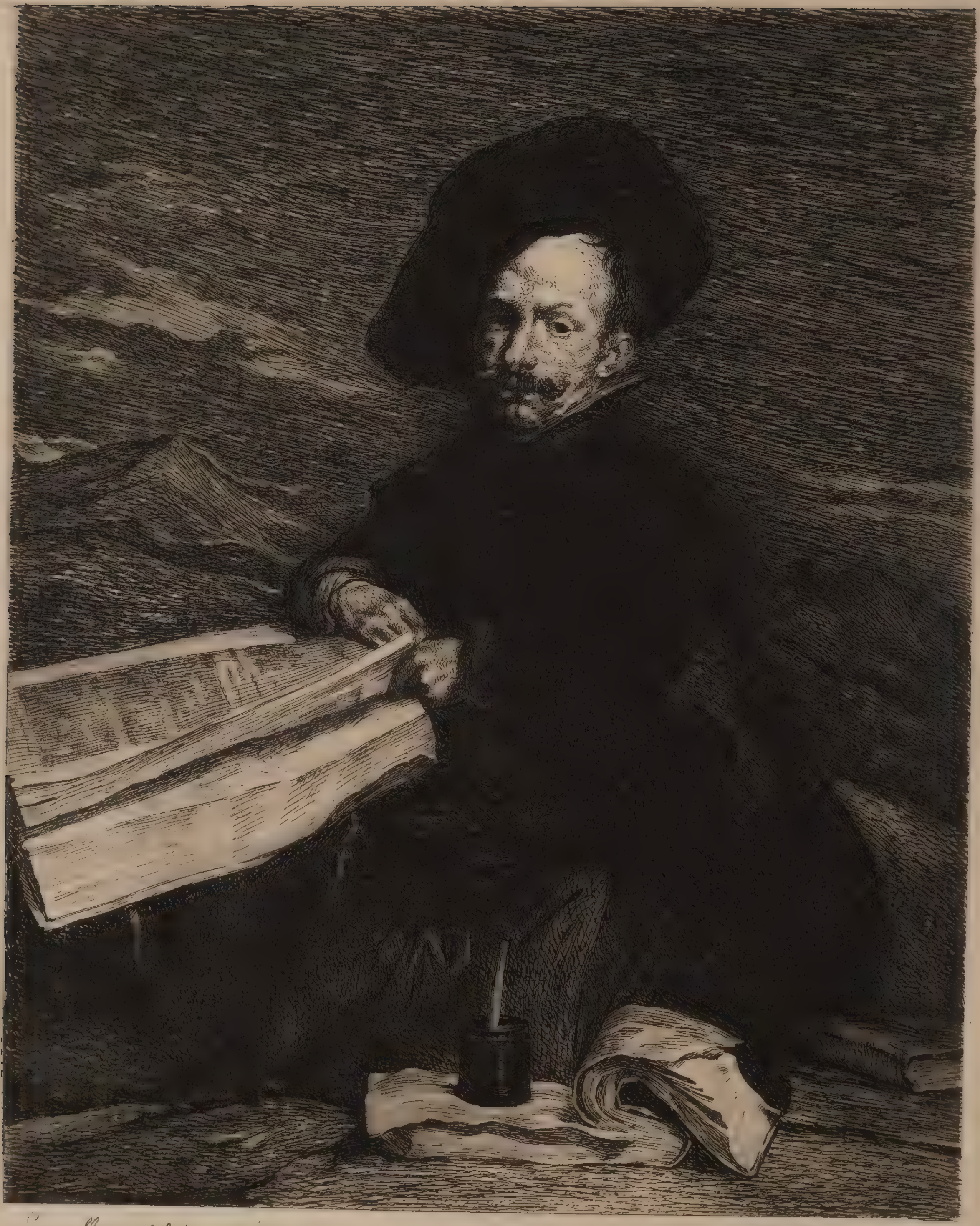
A year of absolute retirement would seem like an interminable desert to any one without an occupation, but I knew from the experience of other years that when once we are absorbed in pursuits that are at the same time very interesting and very laborious, the months melt away like a treasure in the hands of a spendthrift. It was only, indeed, by the most methodical arrangement of our time that we could possibly accomplish the tasks we had voluntarily undertaken. Besides our reading, which, for Alexis, was the most important of my plans, I proposed to collect an herbarium, to include the entire flora of my woodland property, and to make an album of etchings which was to illustrate everything of interest on the estate. In the selection of subjects there was but one serious difficulty—their inexhaustible and bewildering abundance. In the Val Sainte Véronique itself there were groups of magnificent chestnuts, centuries old, shadowing the woodland road that leads into the heart of the forest, and though the dense young woods were cut regularly for their revenue, many an old giant had been spared from generation to generation, and there were hollow trunks more ancient than monarchy in France, and far more deeply rooted. I desired also to illustrate the animal life of the great woods, from the wild geese flying over their summits in the chill evenings of the dying year, to the deer in the sunny glade and the wolves in the winter snow.

RAOUL DUBOIS.

THE SLADE PROFESSORSHIP AT CAMBRIDGE.

ALTHOUGH the PORTFOLIO has not hitherto dealt in Art news, an exception may be made with reference to the recent election to the Slade Professorship at Cambridge. The new Professor, Mr. Sidney Colvin, is already well known to the readers of the PORTFOLIO; but although his contributions to this periodical have not been in any respect inferior to his ablest writings published elsewhere, they can scarcely, of themselves, give a just idea of the variety of his attainments. Mr. Colvin, who is a Fellow of Trinity, which speaks sufficiently for his earlier studies, brought to the study of fine art a mind enriched by the best literary culture which modern languages can afford, and Cambridge will find in him a teacher fully prepared to enter into the very various states of mind which in different ages and countries have expressed themselves in the arts. A painter wrote very lately to one of the newspapers, in order to express his conviction that nobody but an artist could be competent to occupy the chair of Fine Art at Cambridge; but the truth is, that artists by profession are much too busy in cultivating their own little corners of the great Art-Paradise to have time for patient exploration of the wide tracts of human thought that the artistic spirit has rendered interesting and beautiful. The strength and energy of artists are almost entirely absorbed by the contest with technical difficulty. It will be found, I believe, in the future, that these Slade professorships will be best filled by highly-cultivated men of letters, of very wide information, who have given much of their time to the loving study of art from an unprofessional point of view, simply as a matter of intellectual sympathy and curiosity. Mr. Colvin brings to his new duties a larger wealth of intellectual material, and a more practised skill in the use of it, than would be compatible with incessant manual labour in painting or engraving. In congratulating him upon this honourable recognition by his own University, let me express the hope, which will be shared by every reader of these lines, that Mr. Colvin's work at Cambridge may not interfere with his labours for our instruction and entertainment in the PORTFOLIO.

EDITOR.



Guillermie sculp. 1869 *Velazquez pinx*

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XVI.—F. LAGUILLERMIE.

A Dwarf of Philip IV. of Spain, after Velasquez.

M. LAGUILLERMIE is the son of M. Guillaume Laguillermie, a geographical engraver, who produced many valuable works, and was a member of our own Geographical Society. The young Laguillermie gave early evidence of a talent and love for drawing, which were encouraged by his father, who placed him on leaving school in the *atelier* of an engraver named Riffaut, an artist of ability, who died three years afterwards. On losing his master, Laguillermie became a pupil of Leopold Flameng (see Nos. 25 and 37 of this periodical), and engraved under his direction, after Frank Hals, a plate which appeared in the 'Gazette des Beaux Arts.' He then engraved for the Ministère des Beaux-Arts the wonderful head by Antonello of Messina, which is in the *Salon carré* of the Louvre, and next he won the Grand Prix de Rome.

M. Laguillermie has pursued long and laborious studies in Athens, Rome, and Madrid, besides his early work in Paris. He made important drawings from the Temple of Erechtheus at Athens, and others from the frescoes of Michelangelo in the Sixtine. As *Grand Prix* he sent a strikingly vigorous engraving, entitled *La Prière*, an Oriental subject of a Mahometan absorbed in his devotions. In Spain he engraved the famous *Surrender of Breda* by Velasquez, and four other subjects from the same great master, of which one, in our own possession, is herewith offered to our subscribers.

For some time past M. Laguillermie has been chiefly occupied with painting, an art which strengthens the great etchers, who in most instances have been good painters before they took to the point. The serious and prolonged studies of this artist have resulted in a kind of etching perfectly adapted to the interpretation of such a master as Velasquez, who dwelt in an artistic region elevated very far above the small prettinesses of merely technical and mechanical engravers. Few things in the recent history of the fine arts are more hopeful and encouraging than the emancipation of engraving, and its nearer approach to thoroughly artistic painting, which have been effected by Flameng and his pupils Rajon and Laguillermie. Here is a kind of work which we may fairly presume that Velasquez would have himself approved—he, the masculine, plain-spoken, vigorous realist, disdainful of everything but his purpose.

For many years King Philip IV. used to come and see Velasquez working 'dans le silence de l'atelier du Cierzo, où lui seul pouvait pénétrer à toute heure.' And here the great artist, who was *aposentador mayor*, had the choice of the whole court for his models. Amongst the personages who interested him most were the poor ungainly dwarfs, with whom the temper of human grandeur at that time loved to surround its own sublimity for the pleasure and advantage of a contrast altogether favourable to itself. But there were differences amongst the dwarfs, which Velasquez perceived with his keen, artistic intelligence, and profound observation of mankind. One of them was merely silly, another scowled hatred and envy from under his beetling brows; but this one, whose image is here before us, bears the pain of a nobler suffering. O sad and thoughtful face, looking out upon us from the serious canvas of Velasquez, though the grave has closed upon thee for two hundred years, we know what were thy miseries! To be the butt of idle princes and courtiers, and, worse than that, to be treated by the most beautiful women as a thing that could have no passion, to be admitted to an intimacy which was but the negation of thy manhood, to have ridicule for thy portion and buffoonery for thy vocation; and yet to be at the same time fully conscious of an inward human dignity continually outraged, of a capacity for learning and for thought!—All this was enough indeed to drive thee to noble folios, that gave thee some sense of human equality, some intellectual fraternity and consolation!

P. G. HAMERTON.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

XIV.—HENRY FUSELI (1741–1825).

BLAKE, we said, the unregarded Blake, committing his creations not to Academic walls, but to the figured pages of volumes seen by few, and by fewer accounted sane, was the real master of the sublime and terrible in English art. The titular and famous master of them was Henry Fuseli. Nor were the honours of Fuseli so much misplaced after all. For though, on any page of Blake, his contemporaries might have found some vision of portentous tint and mighty line to frown down all the applauded canvases of the Swiss, yet they did not quite applaud the Swiss for nothing. He was a man whose power did not match his desire; his works are not possessions for ever; yet he was far from a mere pretender to inspiration. He stood not quite without the sanctuary; and he had this sure sign of grace, that he knew and honoured the true high-priest. 'What, you here?' cried he one day, when he found Blake copying the Academy cast of the Laokoon for a book illustration; 'what, you here, Meesther Blake? we ought to come and learn of you, not you of us.' Blake was fifteen years younger than Fuseli; but from their first acquaintance, made over the table of Johnson the bookseller, they remained frank mutual admirers and steady friends. The two natures, both of them so abrupt and uncompliant, had no fault to find with one another. Certain affinities in their styles of art are obvious; and that to some extent they mutually took and gave both conceptions and mannerisms is likely, though not easy to establish by definite instances. Fuseli, in spite of his seniority, would have been the taker rather than the giver, as we may guess from the relative energies of inventive genius in the two. Moreover it was an observation of his that Blake was 'd——d good to steal from;' though perhaps that is hardly the observation of a man having theft upon his own conscience. And Fuseli certainly was never one of those whom Blake himself accused, as he did Stothard and others, of stealing from him. On the contrary, he set great store by Fuseli's opinion, and was glad to use an 'advertisement' from his friend's authoritative pen to recommend to the public his illustrated edition of Blair's 'Grave.' And Fuseli dying at last full of years, Blake (who was to follow him in the second summer) said, 'This country must advance two centuries in civilization before it can appreciate him.'

Whether in civilization or only in years,* the country has advanced—not two centuries—a bare half century; and Fuseli is by the young generation laughed at or forgotten. He is laughed at, or at any rate lightly esteemed, as an artist, and forgotten, or at any rate little read, as an author; although both as artist and author he was one of the most conspicuous personages, and most decisive influences, among those that grouped themselves round the central figure of Reynolds in the early days of the English School and Academy. In our present studies it is evident that he must have a leading place.

Henry Fuseli was born at Zurich on the 7th of February, 1741. Towards the middle of the last century the city of Zurich was no mean intellectual centre: it took its part in the awakening of the spirit of Germany in that age; and the family of Füssli were an intellectual family. The father, John Caspar Füssli, was a travelled artist and man of letters, having many friendships with men more distinguished than himself: and his wife Elizabeth Weser bore him as many as eighteen sons and daughters, all of whom died except Rodolph, Caspar, and Heinrich. Rodolph grew up to follow his father's profession of portrait-painter in Zurich; Caspar to be a distinguished scientific entomologist; and Heinrich, with an Englished name and surname, to be Professor of Painting and Keeper in the Royal Academy of Great Britain. At first he had been intended for the Church; nay, had actually begun to practise in the ministry. His keen and vigorous powers fitted him for almost any kind of acquisition, except, so nature had fashioned him, for the acquisition of mathematics. 'The angel Gabriel,' he used to say afterwards, 'the angel Gabriel couldn't have made a mathematician of me.' The studies which he himself preferred from a child were drawing and entomology. The former was strongly discouraged by his father, in the interests of the theological calling to which the boy was designed; but, without shirking theology, he managed, by help of stolen hours and cherished candle-ends, and pocket-money saved for the materials, to keep up privately the habit of drawing. Some seasons spent in the country, for the sake of the mother's health, gave him the opportunity of insect-collecting to the top of his bent, in the company of his brother. And ever afterwards he loved this branch of natural history; and you shall find a moth or beetle or hornet, or some ominous combination of the three, drawn with great affection, and several times its proper size, wherever the subject of a picture gives occasion or excuse for such a creature. The family returning into the city, the young Füssli becomes a diligent and forward student at the Caroline College there, and has friends of his own mettle in the young Lavater, Usteri, and the brothers Hess. It is a time of stirring thought and impulse. The air is filled with new ideas and civic enthusiasms from the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau; a new school of poets is beginning to enrich German literature, and a new school of professors to work for the purgation and development of the German language. Epic and romantic poetry have risen with Klopstock and Wieland; and images of sublimity float before the mind of the ardent student. And he is not only full of German and French literature; he makes himself rapidly master of English and Italian, and is a devourer of Dante and Shakspeare.

'In reading the Holy Scriptures (which he did diligently), the classics, or the modern historians or poets, Fuseli's mind was most powerfully attracted by those incidents or expressions which are out of the ordinary course, and he frequently embodied them with his pencil.' That sentence of the biographer gives in a commonplace way the description of Fuseli's mind, not only as a college student, but in his career throughout. It was the dawn of Romanticism in modern Europe (using the word in its wide sense), and Fuseli was the first of the Romantics in modern European art; that is, he was the first to be spontaneously fascinated by wildness, strangeness, passion, grandeur and the grotesque—'those incidents and expressions which are out of the ordinary course'—to be fascinated by these, to hunt for them in literature at large, and try impetuously to embody them on canvas. But we must wait to follow out this clue, and for the present avoid interrupting our story.

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* The civilization of posterity has come in a shape that would have been questionable to the spirit we are speaking of; who held nothing in greater distaste than the progress of (to take the witty phrase of a late writer) the mechanical kingdom. 'The invention of machines,'—this is one of Fuseli's Aphorisms—'the invention of machines to supersede manual labour will at length destroy population and commerce, and the methods contrived to shorten the apprenticeship of artists annihilate art.'

Heinrich Füssli, at twenty years old, takes holy orders at the same time as his friend Lavater; and begins to preach, not without success, in the manner of a school then bent upon improving the pedantic tradition of pulpit oratory in the place. He is a small, stoutly built youth of penetrating, frank, and fearless aspect, firm set in the lower part of his face, and with a well-formed forehead and nose—advancing along a line of enterprise and aggression: later in life he is said to have had the face of a lion—and his career is determined presently by the aggressive currents in his composition. For he has watched the iniquities of a high magistrate of the city, by name Grebel; and proceeds, in concert with Lavater and other comrades, to denounce them, first with anonymous pamphlets, then with charges openly made and fairly proved. The charges are fairly proved, and the offender punished; but the Grebel connexions are powerful, and may, think the friends of the young champions, be vindictive: so it is settled that they shall withdraw for a season. There is the less reason against Heinrich Füssli's leaving home that his mother, who might have suffered at losing him, has died two years ago. So he accepts the friendly offer of Sulzer, then at Zurich, and travels in the company of that philosopher by way of Augsburg and Leipzig, with hearty welcome everywhere, to Berlin. Here he does his first set of book designs—eight plates out of twelve to an illustrated edition of Bodmer's 'Noachide.' Presently a scheme is set afoot by Bodmer, Sulzer, and one or two more, for establishing a regular channel of communication between the literatures of Germany and England. Young Füssli, for his strength in languages, and especially in English (which he has improved at Berlin under the patronage of our ambassador, Sir Andrew Mitchell, and in conversation with him and Dr. Armstrong), is chosen for this undertaking. Coming to London at the end of 1763, in company with Sir Andrew Mitchell, he is well introduced and well received, especially by the banker Coutts and the bookseller Johnson; and begins to make his livelihood by translating German books into English, and English into German. For the benefit of the insular vocal organs, he changes his name to Fusseli. In 1765 he translates the 'Anmerkungen' of Winckelmann, under the title of 'Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks,'—a really important example, for the benefit of the insular mind, of the awakening culture of Germany. He keeps up his drawing in hours unoccupied with translation. His eloquence, instruction, and vivacity make him welcome to many acquaintances. Being apt both to fall in love and be fallen in love with, he goes through several passages of that kind, but generally at cross purposes, caring for some one who does not care for him, and *vice versâ*, as in the case of Angelica Kaufmann and Mary Moser, both of them daughters of men of his own speech settled in London and practising as artists. It is thought a good opening for him by his friends when he goes as travelling tutor to France with Lord Waldegrave's son and heir; but pupil and tutor quarrel, and he returns. Next he ventures an original composition of his own in English, with an emblematic frontispiece. This is a piece published in 1767, for the defence of Rousseau against Hume after their quarrel, and against Voltaire: the cut shows Voltaire riding on the back of a bridled and grovelling man representing the human race, on a road beside which Justice and Liberty hang gibbeted; while Rousseau in the foreground points to the misdemeanant with reprehension.

At this time the incorporation of the New Royal Academy, after many preliminary attempts, and with much public discussion and expectation, was on the point of taking place; art and its future in this country were in everybody's mouth; and Fuseli was more and more called by the spirit within him to be an artist. He presented himself with some drawings to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and from him received the strongest encouragement. Thereupon he arranged to start in the winter of 1769, in company with his old acquaintance Dr. Armstrong, for Italy and the galleries. The friends quarrelled fiercely on board ship, and parted at the instant of landing, not to be reconciled again until Armstrong was on his death-bed. In Italy the German Swiss gives his name its final and Italianized form of Fuseli; (but it is curious to note how the English engravers are always loose about the spelling of it, and call him Fuzeli, Fuessly, or anon Fuzzley.) He stayed there nearly ten years, chiefly in Rome, but not without visits to the other centres; reading and learning with his usual vehement application and staunch retention; not copying the old masters so much as trying to steep himself in their spirit by enthusiastic contemplation and study of 'the principles on which they had worked.' It was in the spirit of Michelangelo, according to Sir Joshua's counsel as well as to his own predilections for grandeur and the *terribil via,* that he sought to steep himself much above all; lying on his back in the Sistine Chapel all day and every day for weeks together, inflaming himself with admiration and emulation. He produced now and then original drawings, which with their daring and impetuousness made the nerveless Italians of the place and time cry out that Michelangelo himself had come again. He worked from the antique a good deal, a little at anatomy, and a great deal at his books, refreshing his Greek and making himself master of Greek literature to a point not common among professed classical scholars. He made many friends; suffered, and recovered, from a fever that turned his hair white; sent one or two pictures, one from 'Henry IV.,' another from 'Macbeth,' to the exhibitions in England; finally started northwards, in 1778, and after a visit of some months to his father at Zurich, and a desperate love affair with a magistrate's daughter of the city (the *Nanna* whose music is praised by Goethe), reached London again the next year.

West was by that time the established leader of historical painting in England; and Fuseli, who did not admire West's cold sort of high art, rushed to the trial of strength with three pictures of his own. These were much applauded by the connoisseurs for their spirit and boldness; but Fuseli's first popular success was with the well-known *Nightmare,* of which he afterwards made several different versions, and of which all the versions are familiar to the reader by the engravings. The *Nightmare* was an immense success: as in truth an energetic and fantastic wildness, the hobgoblinry of the Teutonic genius—the hobgoblinry of Hofmann—is in reality a stronger point with Fuseli than either the terrible or the graceful, and always underlies, as something genuine under what else seems spurious, the efforts which his imagination so vehemently makes at these. From this time until his death—that is, for five-and-forty years—Fuseli is a constant producer in painting, a tolerably frequent one in the minor work of book designing, and a very frequent one in literature. It is a well-filled life. The 'ingenious foreigner,' as he is at first called in the English circles where his gifts and his power of producing them make him welcome, gradually comes, as he deserves, to be the recognised authority in this country in matters of art lore; and besides, is listened to with deference as a critic both of classical and English literature. He is highly esteemed by the elegant Roscoe; Cowper accepts with gratitude his suggestions and corrections to the translation of Homer; he writes continually and with applause in Johnson's 'Analytical Review.' In spite of his German accent, his 'By Gode' or 'By Gort,' and the round vocabulary of expletives which he declares he picked up from Armstrong at Berlin long ago, and which, as people do with foreign expletives, he uses in excess and somewhat fortuitously,—in spite of such matters, he is acknowledged to be one of the best talkers of the time. He is not a good listener, nor even a good arguer, but a first-rate declamatory talker, full of matter, vigorous and original in expression, with a memory never at fault, a temper not to brook discussion but to enforce assertion with reckless raillery, and a wit to second the temper. He is self-asserting, but not vain; or if vain, then with the large and domineering and not the petty and spiteful sort of vanity.

The idea of the Shakspeare Gallery—claimed, as we have seen, to be originally Romney's idea—was well fitted to add impetus to the impetuous, and to set off Fuseli's mind and hand at speed. He contributed to that exhibition eight pictures, which everybody knows by the prints: one from the 'Tempest;' two from the 'Midsummer Night's Dream;' one from 'Henry V.;' one from 'Lear;' one from 'Hamlet'—the famous design of the Ghost with Hamlet and Horatio on the platform; one from 'Henry IV.;' and one from 'Macbeth.' They were among the most admired pieces of the Gallery; and still haunt the imaginations of many of us, who have been accustomed from childhood to associate the engravings from them with the passages they illustrate, with a shudder or a glow not yet quite exhausted. The ghost is assuredly a notable ghost, with his majestic limbs and imperious gesture; the struggle of Hamlet to burst away from Horatio's hold has a degree of energy in excess of the occasion and of possibility; but is designed with extraordinary spirit. So are the attitudes of Macbeth and Banquo on the heath exaggerated; but the sense of horror and mystery is really felt and conveyed. Again, the elfin creatures in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' pair are somewhat coarse and plebeian in conception; but elfin creatures they are; you are in a hobgoblin world; the painter has felt the romance, the Teutonic fantasy, of the poetry in a kindred way, though he has not been able to see the figures of it in his mind's eye in forms of sufficient exquisiteness. Where you want the highest tenderness with sublimity, in the Lear and Cordelia, there the painter fails; there his imagination strains and is theatrical. You may remember another still worse Lear and Cordelia of the same designer's, where the daughter, pressing to her broken sire at the last, has actually the same attitude of writhing voluptuousness as Titania has in this Boydell series, pressing to the side of the transformed boor she takes for lover.

While the Shakspeare pictures were in progress, Fuseli gave himself the further occupation of superintending the English quarto edition of Lavater's 'Essays on Physiognomy,' to which also he wrote a preface. In 1788 he married a Miss Rawlins of Bath Easton, and moved to a house in Queen Anne Street. Within a year or two of his marriage another distinguished woman fell enamoured of his person and discourse, in spite of his almost fifty years. This was Mary Wollstonecraft, who, after a year or two's acquaintance with Fuseli, and their sharing of several enthusiasms in literature and politics, declared to his wife that she could not live without him, and asked to be made an inmate of their house. Fuseli being sincerely attached to his wife, and she upon this determined to break off the relation, Mary Wollstonecraft went off in much despair to France. A year or two before, Fuseli had been elected to the full honours of Royal Academician, after two years of Associateship, against Reynolds' *protégé*, the architect Bonomi. The incident of the President's indignation and momentary retirement upon this are well known, though against Fuseli personally he kept no grudge. At the same time Fuseli conceived the idea of the great work of his life—the Milton Gallery.

Originally the idea had been, according to the fashion of that age, for a Milton to be published by Johnson, edited by Cowper, and illustrated with engravings after Fuseli; and it was by way of designs for the engraver that Fuseli executed his first few paintings to the works of 'Our Nation's Bard.' The book programme, however, dropped through; and then Fuseli determined to carry out his great scheme of Milton illustration alone, in independence of publisher and engraver. The best part of his strength between the years 1790 and 1800 was given to this undertaking; friendly patrons helping, during a part of that interval, to provide him with the means of leisure for the work, which, though he did not allow it to stop his exhibiting at the Royal Academy, of necessity cut him off from the practice of book illustrating, whereby, with the other imaginative painters of his time, he made his ordinary livelihood rather than by the sale of pictures.

It was one of the strong points of Fuseli for his admirers, and for his detractors one of his blemishes, that his fancy ranged freely from the terrible to the playful, from the 'Vision of the Lazar House' to the jocund images of the 'Allegro,' or again from the ominous apparition of the witches in 'Macbeth' to the laughing one of the elves and fairies in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' That versatility was a favourite theme of contemporary ecstasies on the one hand, and on the other an occasion of solemn rebuke on the part of those who held for rigid historics and heroics as the only right thing, and who therefore constituted a West party among the lovers of high art. For us the versatility shall assuredly be a matter of praise rather than of blame; and we shall further define it as a part of that whereby Fuseli stands marked in the history of European art as a true Romantic. He is first a Romantic in the sources of his subjects. He inspired himself not only from Shakspeare and Milton—the national literature of England, almost dominating English culture in that century, while it penetrated neighbour literatures with the commencements of Romantic influence—he inspired himself not only from these, but from Dante, from the 'Nibelungen Lied,' from folk lore, and many other sources outside the old classic or pseudo-classic cycles. He is a Romantic in that; but that is only one half of what we mean by Romanticism. The other half consists in the mode of treating the sources; and depends on whether they are treated in a cold spirit of prescriptive dignity and pretentiousness, or in an ardent spirit of fancy and free invention. Fuseli was a Romantic as much by one as by the other part of his procedure, as much by the temper of his art as by its range; he does not think any degree of playfulness, of fantastic grimness or fantastic levity, beneath the dignity of his imagination or his brush; and he goes at his subjects, of whichever kind, out of zeal, predilection, and excitement, not solemnly out of obligation and dignified like a West. And so the forty Milton pictures, the great work of his life, cover a great range, as we have hinted, from grave to gay—from 'Penseroso' to 'Allegro'.

The exhibition was opened on the 20th of May, 1799. It had aroused much expectation among the inner circles beforehand. Lawrence and Opie had wished to take part both in the undertaking and its profits; but Fuseli had determined to stand alone. And after all, the undertaking proved a failure. The press was hostile or silent: the public apathetic; the enthusiasm of the inner circle, who declared expectation surpassed, did not communicate itself further; in its first season the exhibition did not pay its expenses. Fuseli persevered, added more pictures, and reopened the next season; the Royal Academy held a dinner with speeches in the gallery for his encouragement; but still no success. He bore his chagrin courageously enough. At this time Barry was dismissed, on the score of ungracious and violent bearing, both from the Professorship of Painting in the Royal Academy and from the ranks of the body; Fuseli was elected to succeed him in the chair, and began lecturing, with much applause, in the course of 1801. In the same year he lost his early friend Lavater. In the next he went to Paris with a party of friends to study the spoils of conquest assembled by the First Consul in the Louvre; and brought home many observations on pictures and masters. In the next, he moved into Sir William Chambers's house in Berners Street; in the next, being appointed Keeper to the Academy, to the official apartments in Somerset House. For the next twenty years he remained a patriarch among artists, resigning and then again resuming the Professorship of Painting, and by special privilege holding it for some time together with his Keepership; exhibiting, writing, editing, as always; popular with the students in spite of his hot temper and strong language, and having among those who owed him the best of their training some of the most distinguished of the succeeding generation—Haydon, Mulready, Etty; sharing with Flaxman, among English artists, the homage of Canova when that famous man came to England in 1816; retaining, in spite of one severe recurrence of the old Roman fever, the vigour of his temperament and faculties; and dying at last, a stout old lion of eighty-four, in the house of the Countess of Guilford, the daughter of one of his earliest friends in England, the banker Coutts, and herself the kindest and most constant of his later friends and patrons.

Of the foreign influences which came into the English school at that age, Fuseli's, little result as it had in the end, was undoubtedly the best. It was an influence almost as robust as that of Cipriani and his imitators was enervating. To nourish a nascent school with ideas both of learning and fancy, nothing could have been better fitted than the genius of Fuseli, with his command of the literature of art, which was unrivalled in his time, and the extraordinary command which he also had of the general literature of many languages. To train a nascent school by adequate example and performance he was less capable. For indeed his handiwork is tainted with faults which go far to justify, though they do not justify altogether, the disrepute into which it has fallen. In the first place there are the material or technical faults of careless method, and such a perverse neglect of his vehicles, even in an age when all artists neglected their vehicles, that time has practically abolished the most of what he did. And then, when the picture has not gone in that way, there is the dingy, unprepossessing character of his colouring, deliberately chosen, as we are often assured, because neutral or negative colouring is best suited (witness Michelangelo) for sublime and impressive subjects. It is strange to find Fuseli in one breath avowing this principle, and in another describing colour as a thing which he has courted 'as a lover who woos his mistress in vain:' while in his lectures on colour he describes the splendours of the Venetians with the most energetic diction and a perfect justice of appreciation. Then, for the matters of invention and design, to excel in which was his study and his boast; well, granting him, as we have done, a true Romantic designer before Romanticism had taken consciousness of itself—granting him a free and ardent range among subjects strongly moving to the imagination—there is much to set against the merits which his invention and design had in that range. In the highest parts of it, in the veritable sublime, I do not know that he can be said once to have really succeeded. In a little symmetrical design like that called ΣΙΓΑ, Silence, with the head bowed over and hair falling between the knees—in this and one or two more, where Fuseli is likest Blake, he has a touch of real sublimity. But in the *Lazar-house*, in the *Satan and Ithuriel*, in the *Sin and Death*, and the rest, it is scarcely real sublimity, it is excited vehemence, straining, and exaggeration. It is the old mistake, the idea that the *terribil via* of Michelangelo can be trodden by any one who has not gone through Michelangelo's labour—nay, by any one without generations of predecessors who have gone through the labour of the generations that preceded Michelangelo. Besides that mistake, there is the innate disqualification of a genius which is essentially fantastical (see the subject of Tell leaping ashore from the boat), and which misjudges itself in taking its fantastic energy for the energy of sublimity. And again, there is the tendency to generalise by vacuity, to which, in the case of Romney, we pointed as the bane of English high art. Fuseli in criticism is perfectly awake to this fault; one of the weightiest of his Aphorisms is directed against the danger of confounding vacuity with breadth; but he does not avoid the danger for all that. Indeed, in those weighty Aphorisms, which are the best things he wrote, with their energetic condensation, and their powerful though no doubt gymnastic treatment of our language*—in those he stigmatises several of the very faults he himself most frequently commits. Of course he was not ignorant of Lessing; and the Aphorisms, as well as the Lectures, which consist in great part of the same Aphorisms diluted, and as well as the criticisms of the 'Analytical Review,' present points of Lessing's *Laokoon* admirably stated and applied. But he does not put into practice those points in the relations of painting and poetry, and their separation. One point—that which Lessing makes when he particularly calls Milton a poet unfit to supply images to the painter—Fuseli strangely makes it the chief work of his life to traverse. That British culture consisted so largely of Milton—that the imaginative painter could only live by supplying what the booksellers demanded, and that the booksellers demanded illustrations of the British poets—all this does not account fully for Fuseli's choice. No, he was another instance of the lack, in the most imaginative painters of that age, of a genius possessed by pictorial images as distinct from images of literature—a lack of which we have spoken already, and which did as much as the lack of disciplined labour, and did it more fatally, to render abortive the would-be Michelangelos of our school. Where Fuseli, then, would be Michelangelo, he fails; where he is sublime, he tilts over into the ridiculous; he succeeds where he lets himself be familiarly wild and grotesque, with a permissible and half humorous exaggeration, as in the *Nightmare;* or where in embodying a literary subject he combines a certain weird symmetry of vehement and consentaneous action with fantastic physiognomic grimness and the mystery of smoky background, as in the well-known Witches of our illustration.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

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* When Fuseli writes:—'Some men enter the gates of art with golden keys, and take their place with dignity among the demigods of fame; some burst the doors, and leap into a niche with savage power; thousands consume their time in chinking useless keys, and making feeble pushes against the inexorable doors;' or again of Michelangelo:—'A beggar rose from his hand the patriarch of poverty; the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his women are moulds of generation; his infants teem with the man; his men are a race of giants;' when he writes so, we have a good example of his style. It is grandiloquent, it is Johnsonian; it errs by what I have called the gymnastic procedure of a pen conscious of insecurity, and determined to prove its footing by feats; but it is astonishing for a foreigner, and always personal, piquant, and stirring

ROME, BY FRANCIS WEY.*

THIS is a large book, yet not too large, because full of interest and varied in a remarkable degree; not exactly learned, but the next thing to it, and yet light and a little epigrammatic in the French manner, being a translation from that language. It is scarcely possible to imagine any volume more seductive and inviting laid on one's table of an evening than this with the single word 'Rome' on the outside; 'three hundred and forty-five engravings on wood, designed by the most celebrated artists,' and a very good plan of the city, within. We open it as a lady might a casket of jewels sent her unexpectedly, or an innocent ultramontane a box of relics, and as we pass the finger along the well-remembered streets on the map, we can fancy ourselves, in this bitter English spring weather, again under the lidless eye of the torrid sun of southern Italy.

The book, as we said, is rather a large book, but then the subject is so much larger, that these thirty chapters or so, with their immense range of subject, are very concise indeed; and no doubt the author might begin again, or the writer of 'Roba di Roma,' who writes an amusing and half-jealous introduction, addressed to the publishers, would find just as much as ever to say of the city so long the capital of the student's world.

We say of the student's world, that of the unarmed speculator, the diver, who 'when a beggar he prepares to plunge'—for it can't now be said to be so to any other—and 'when a prince he rises with his pearl,' he looks back to his life in Rome, if he lived there any length of time, as not having been without danger. There were so many lotuses to eat, growing all about him as large as Jonah's gourd, and it is so pleasant to any one not of pure northern blood to do nothing! The truth now is, no effective modern man lives in Rome, not even the poet, who is externally independent of active life; only sculptors are found there, and these choose their residence professionally, and are of late years mostly Americans.

But there is a swarm of other artists, not effective men, individuals who enjoy the apparently safe position of waiting till next year, who have actually lost sight of their first object in fixing upon art as their vocation, or who have a little money—enough for the cost of the *camera* and the *trattoria*, if not for that of the larger studio, which they are always thinking, however, of taking, in the meanwhile amusing their friends by inveighing against the Italian court coming to the capital, as it will raise the charge for everything! These gentlemen occupy themselves almost invariably on their canvasses with *pifferari;* the same everlasting group we have seen so often, as if the old man, the young man, and the woman, who sit for all of them, were three immortals, their apparel indestructible, reappearing from the Alban hills every autumn, to sit again to the perennial supply of mild English artists. This subject has employed them from the early days of Eastlake to those of George Mason, whom we have just lost, two of the best of *pifferari* painters or sketchers. Two years ago, in the Royal Academy Exhibition, we had them as large as life, let us hope the apotheosis of *pifferari;* in the book under review, happily, they don't appear. Another subject, always to be found under the hands of the artists who dip their hard rolls into the black coffee at the Greco every morning, finishing up with a large tumbler of water, is the girl of the Maremma, with a distaff or a bundle of corn; the folded white linen head-dress, the bodice and apron, all in order. This elaborate work is generally in uncertain progress, and the model to be seen proceeding towards the painter's abode in a listless way every forenoon about nine o'clock. This girl, too, seems to have eaten the apple of immortality, and to be the same in every particular as she was before poor Leopold Robert so suddenly ended his career. If she were not the same, not only in the typical dark eyes and hair, but in every bit of colour in her dress, she would not do. We remember hearing of one ambitious lover of the *far niente,* who began a Madonna and Child in the manner of Raphael (because everybody here except the French must do something like somebody else), his young model being an early mother with her infant in her arms—a female infant, who grew up before the picture was done. The mother became an old woman, suggesting the introduction of St. Elizabeth, and the infant, now a mother herself, sat for his unfinished Virgin!

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* 'Rome,' by Francis Wey. With an Introduction by W. W. Story, Author of 'Roba di Roma,' and 345 Illustrations. London: Chapman and Hall.

Forty or fifty years ago all our figure painters, who were ambitious of any practice but portraiture, considered a certain stay in Rome necessary to charter them, and enable them to talk as well as paint. About that period the brother of the present writer went thither, and returned, after two years, with a strangely different result from that we have sketched. He found great painters—that is, painters with great motives—then living in Rome; Overbeck the ascetic, and Bouloff the Russian, who had just finished the *Destruction of Pompeii*, and he determined to do something *unlike* any one else. The effect of Rome on him was to intensify his ambition, and yet he left it with a mixture of regret and disappointment, expressed in a poem he called 'Farewell.' In this poem, roughly written in his diary, he says adieu to studios and picture-galleries, churches, artists, and dilettante.

Some by their constitution formed to think
Wonders of most things, find their hopes are cheated,
And often, with a misanthropic shrink,
Turn round and curse their dreams so overheated;
While still their disappointment, many-feeted,
Keeps up with them from stage to stage, and gives
Small recompense for mischiefs often greeted;
Till knowledge their anticipation shrives,
And turns them out, to lead 'mong grass and graves their lives.

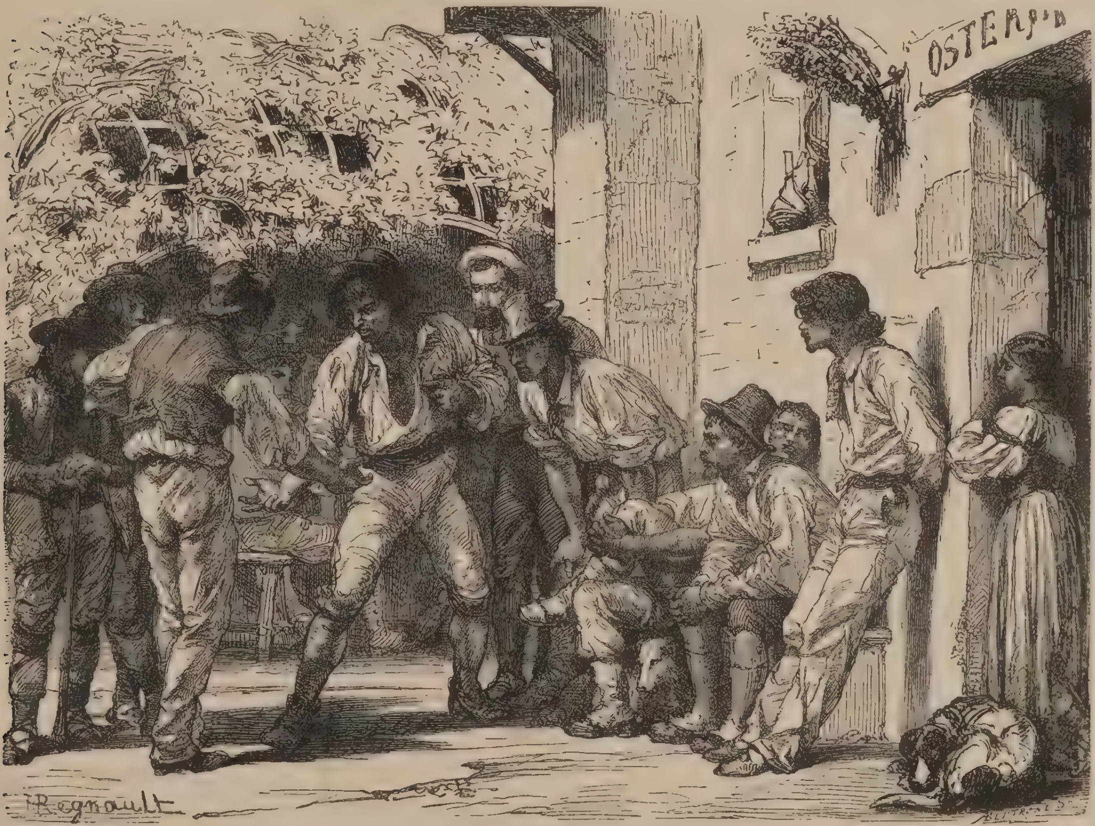
That I've been disappointed thus, or pleased,
May to myself more clearly hence appear;
That I've been oft sore, satiated, or teazed,
I know; but that is different; more severe
Question I make than these brief feelings bear
An answer to. Meanwhile I hold my breath,
While Time doth weave around for me to wear
A robe that hidden in its meshes hath
A power of living life—a darker power than death.

* * * * * *

But I must end. In short, farewell to all
That I have met! Now I look round and view
From where I stand, the glorious Capitol:
It answers more than words, and I renew
My ancient sympathies and loves, though few
Realities have equalled them, they come
Back on me fair, but not like those that flew
Before me beckoning, when I left the home
To which I now return, rejoicing I know Rome.

But why is it that a residence in the most interesting capital in the world may be even considered dangerous to our painters professionally? The Roman school was a school of design; Raphael and all his pupils have a uniform surface of solid paint repulsive to us, and destructive to our pleasure in their works as *painting*. We now enjoy pictures exactly in proportion to their excellent execution in texture and colour, derived not so much from Italian or Spanish practice as from Flemish; and any man (or school as, for instance, the great modern German school now passing away) who paints in the Roman manner, and values design and drawing before colour and the technical charm of surface, is lost. The other day we met a Scottish friend of very remarkable ability and assured position who had spent the winter in Rome,—now that he could enjoy it, as he said,—and we found he had not even entered the Sistine and Raphael's apartments in the Vatican. On enquiring the reason, he replied; 'I don't care for that kind of painting; it is of no use nowadays: the best *picture* in Rome is the portrait of the Pope by Velasquez!' This was expressing exactly the prudential point of view; criticism was cut off.

We have not forgotten Wey's 'Rome' all this time, although we have not been directly speaking of it. As a writer, M. Wey is agreeable in a remarkable degree and versatile in his information, so that he is at home equally in discussing art, religion, history, and archæology, at least within the limit prescribed by popular style. He aspires, indeed, to be sympathetic with all steps in the life of the *Urbs*, the centre of old civilisation,—with Pagan antiquity, the infancy of Christianity, Byzantine arts and quarrels, the struggles and the transformation of the early Middle Ages, the ecclesiastical supremacy of the thirteenth century, the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth, and modern manners and ideas. But he is not, like About and others (some of whom childishly advocate intervention in favour of the power they ridicule), against the pretensions of the head of the Church; on the contrary, he believes in St. Peter's chair, statue, and other properties. It is evident, besides, that he has lived and worked with the students of his own country resident there, and no other nation sends so many or so good a set. Ours do as they like and lose themselves; the French work under the direction of the Academy, and come to profit. Thus it must have been that he managed to get the 345 illustrations done, which are, nearly all of them, really valuable. At first we were inclined to say they were transferred from photographs, but on careful examination we found, although such pictures may have been used as raw material, and closely imitated sometimes, as in the *Restoration of the Clivus Victoriæ*, they are all artists' handwork. Three or four large cuts of interiors of Vatican Galleries are infinitely minute, and must have been drawn on the wood on the spot. That of *Women of the Campagna* we thought at once had been reproduced from the photographic lens, but the name of Regnault disproved the supposition; and nearly all the figure-subjects are by that great genius, the latest and most French of French painters, whose pet subject was decapitation. The numerous designs by Regnault themselves make the publication artistically interesting,—those of *Players at Ball*, and at *Mora*, and the *Father of the Philippines* especially; but those showing the doings of the German Masqueraders are like Doré, and only worthy of the fantastic affair they illustrate. We should have liked M. Wey, or the publishers, to have told us something about Regnault and the other illustrators, at what time his drawings were done particularly. The book itself, of which this is a splendid English edition, was published originally in 1871, called 'Rome; Descriptions et Souvenirs,' and before that some of the engravings, at least, had appeared from time to time in Parisian periodicals.



ROMANS PLAYING AT MORA, *from a drawing by* H. REGNAULT.

WILLIAM B. SCOTT.

NEAR ELCHE.

Etching by Adolphe Balfourier.

We had hoped, this month, to give a short biography of M. Balfourier, who is one of the most experienced of French landscape-painters, but want of space compels us to reserve it for a future occasion. The present etching may be taken as a representative example of M. Balfourier's manner as an aquafortist. He does not cultivate etching much as an independent art, but makes use of it to retain a record of his pictures before they leave his studio, and his plates are sufficiently rich in tone to interpret painting adequately.

This artist has stayed a good deal in Spain, especially in the neighbourhood of the remarkable old Moorish town of Elche. Mr. Hare, one of the most recent writers on Spain, tells us that Elche is an enchanting place, and he speaks with enthusiasm of those 'thick groves of magnificent date-palms, where all is richness and splendour of colour;' of the 'little streams bordered with prickly pear and pomegranates,' which are the very subjects that have most occupied M. Balfourier's pencil. With the Moorish town 'rising above like Jerusalem, with its flat-roofed houses, old walls, and crowning mosque,' and the dried-up ravine of 'the Vinalapo, the desolate gravelly plain beyond all these, which assumes a wonderful colour towards sunset,' with clear violet mountains beyond, this place offers material to an artist that he may go much farther east to discover in equal perfection.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER III.

On the third day after our arrival in the valley the weather, though still thickly overcast, was fair enough to encourage ideas of exploration, and we set out after *déjeuner* with the intention of making an excursion in shape something like the outline of a pear, and so getting home again about dinner-time. We began by following one of the narrow roads which from time immemorial have given access to the interior of the forest. There is evidence that some of these roads existed in the old Gaulish times, and the engineers of those days, trusting to the strength and patience of their oxen, seem to have considered mere steepness as no objection whatever. The road we followed was often closely hemmed in on both sides by impenetrable hedges of old beech, whose trunks were twisted into the most fantastic shapes long ago, when they were young, and have remained so ever since in grim deformity. Some of them were really painful to contemplate, the efforts of nature had been so thwarted. They were like powerful arms of men bound at the wrists to some immovable front of rock, with muscles swelling in vain efforts for deliverance. I thought of that dreadful fancy of Dante's, the suffering human trees, that bled dark drops of blood when a little twig was broken, and asked so pitifully, 'Why dost thou break me, why dost thou tear me, hast thou no pity?'

> Però disse 'l Maestro: 'Se tu tronchi
> Qualche fraschetta d' una d' este piante
> Li pensier ch' hai si faran tutti monchi.'
> Allor pors' io la mano un poco avanti
> E colsi un ramoscel da un gran pruno,
> E 'l tronco suo gridò: Perchè mi schiante?'
> Da che fatto fu poi di sangue bruno.
> Ricomincio a gridar: 'Perchè mi scerpi?
> *Non hai tu spirto di pietate alcuno?'*

After being hedged in by these gaunt arms for the distance of nearly a mile, the road became less distinctly separated from the surrounding forest-land; it made several sudden turns, and finally offered us a bifurcation. Having nothing to guide us but a general project of wandering, we took the side which seemed most in our intended direction, and followed it where it might lead. The wheel-ruts soon ceased altogether; the road became a mere footpath, and after winding in an uncertain manner for a long distance, emerged at last on the very summit of a lofty knoll, where, in the midst of an open space of greensward, stood four enormous chestnuts, surrounded by tall bushes of holly with an abundance of red berries in the midst of its varnished green. Although we were certainly on the top of one of the many hills which carry this great forest upon their ample sides, it was impossible to see anything beyond the narrow circle of the open space around us. We were enclosed by a sylvan wall, penetrable indeed by a pedestrian traveller, but as impervious to his vision as if it had been built of granite blocks. We were certainly not on our own land; these giant chestnuts were not mine, for all the great old forest-trees that belonged to me were known to me as the richest plum-trees in his orchard are known to the market-gardener. It was impossible to ascertain the points of the compass. The whole sky was covered with one dense low cloud, not lighter in one place than another, so that we could not guess the sun's position; nor did any inclination of the trees, or any growth of moss, give a reliable indication of the prevailing wind, and if they had done the indication would have been useless to us in our ignorance of the local meteorology. To retrace the path we came by might have been possible, though difficult; but I felt an invincible repugnance to a mere retreat. So partly in reliance upon chance, and partly trusting an instinct of locality that I cannot account for or explain (an animal instinct, like that of the salmon or the house-marten) I determined to push on through the dense wood till the topography of the country became somewhat more intelligible to us.

Before quitting the great chestnuts, I made an observation which confirmed what I had observed before with reference to the adherence of dead leaves. These trees, as a rule, were entirely denuded of their foliage; but two or three branches, on the contrary, retained almost every leaf that had adorned them in the glory of summer—changed indeed, in colour, from rich dark green to a lovely pale gold, far more delicate than the winter colouring of beech or oak, yet scarcely altered in form, and preserving great purity of curve. Now the question which interested me was, how it happened that these branches retained their foliage whilst all the others had lost it? The answer is, that a branch which retains its foliage has always been virtually severed from the stem by fracture before the fall of the leaf. Why the leaves fall from a branch that shares the life of the tree, and adhere to one that is separated from it I am not scientific enough to decide quite positively, but naturally conclude that it is due to the continuance of circulation in the one case and its stoppage in the other, the leaves adhering when the sap has not been able to descend, but detaching themselves easily when the course of the descending sap has met with no interruption. This suggested the reflection that a very close analogy may be found in human affairs. A colony severed from the mother country will often preserve words, and even habits in thought and action, which have dropped off from the parent since the separation took place, and which would also have been lost by the colony if the old closeness of connexion had never been interrupted. The French Canadians are an excellent instance of this; they have preserved traditional ways of thinking, and traditional manners, which have dropped off long since from the inhabitants of France itself.

Although the season of the year was that which is generally reputed to be least interesting, and most completely denuded of the charms of colour; although the sky above us was like lead, and there was not one flower on the earth beneath: still it would have been impossible for a painter, or for any one capable of seeing colour in nature, not to be continually interested by the wonderful variety around us. It was not merely those pale, golden leaves of the broken chestnut branches, but the rich green of the holly with its bright red berries, and the abundant beech leaves, and the young oaks that kept their foliage as in summer, changed only in hue and in the form of the shrivelled leaves. Amidst intensities of green, of moss and holly, blood-red berries, and foliage like rusted iron or faded gilding, the greys and purples of a thousand trunks and bewildering intricate branches had a beauty that is lost in the too monotonous verdure of July. The American philosopher, Emerson, says, 'The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is pleasant only half the year. I please myself with observing the graces of the winter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the genial influences of summer. To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty.'

It was not without some feeling of anxiety that I quitted that open space, to enter once more the obscurity of innumerable trees. The words of Dante came to me again, this time with a deeper gravity of meaning than I had ever found in them before,—

Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Chè la diritta via era smarrita.
  Ahi quanto a dir qual' era è cosa dura
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura!

Gradually there came upon me a certain *feeling* that I had never yet experienced, but which Dante had known well. Hour after hour we walked through that interminable forest, and the strange new feeling became more and more oppressive, till at length I realised what the old poet meant with

Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte.

We were so hemmed in by millions of stems, that although free to walk everywhere, we were held in an illimitable prison. The trees began to wear a hostile and menacing aspect, as if we were wandering amongst unnumbered enemies. They had no longer for us any grace or beauty, but united together in one horrible monotony. I remembered the enormous extent of this forest, which covers a hundred square miles; its complicated and difficult geography, not thoroughly known to any human being; its endless variety of hill and dale, that it would take weeks of travel to explore in their intricate detail. And then I reflected on the single hour of daylight that remained to us—one hour,—and that we were not only unprovided with food, but had no covering besides our light pedestrian dress. Alexis had brought his gun. I had my tobacco, and a good provision of matches, and a little brandy in my flask; but in the way of food, not even so much as a biscuit.

The time was past when it might have been yet possible to retrace our steps, and the only practicable issue before us was to get out of the forest as we might. I knew that there were occasional openings, little patches of tilled ground with rude habitations for the woodmen, and in one of these openings we should probably find a guide. We came at last to a clearing of about five acres on the slope of a hill-side, and from this place were able to get a view of the surrounding country. All that was visible consisted chiefly of a valley, with a stream at the bottom, in character so precisely like the Val Ste. Véronique, that I concluded it to be the same rivulet, and therefore, of course, the most reliable of guides. On one side of the clearing passed a road of the kind common in these forests, so narrow in parts that an ox-cart would graze the trees on both sides, and then suddenly widening with verdant margins of pasture to the right hand or to the left. In one of these places, huddled in a coarse striped cloak and spinning from her distaff, stood the first human being we met with in these solitudes, a shepherdess with a flock of the tiny Morvan sheep, and a wolfish dog to guard them. The dog rushed at us as if we had been wild animals; the girl threw her sabots at him, and hit him rather severely, uttering violent exclamations in a language entirely unintelligible by us. I asked her whither the road led, pointing before me, and she answered '*à la fôret*,' (pronounced *fôôret*); then I inquired whither the road led in the other direction, and she answered '*à la pâture*,' (pronounced *pââture*). These two words comprised her entire conception of geography. In vain I mentioned the names of the Val Ste. Véronique, of the villages I knew, of the nearest market-town,—all these were utterly unknown to her. Forest and pasture! could we not see them with our eyes?

We followed the road for about a mile, and met a lad of sixteen with two curs after him. Here, at last, was a reliable guide. We asked him whither the road led, and got for answer '*à la fôôret;*' then we asked him where it came from, and he answered '*de la pââture.*' He, too, was entirely impervious to questions about distant localities, and he did not understand French, whether from weak intellect or mere isolation I know not. He spoke the uncouth *patois* of these regions, a language more remote from French than is either Spanish or Italian. Yet even his *patois* was spoken with the greatest hesitation, as if utterance of any kind were a difficulty for him.

It being impossible to gain any information from these dwellers in the wilderness, I determined to take a resolution and follow the rivulet in the valley. If it were our own rivulet it would surely lead us homewards; if not, we should at least escape the danger of wandering uselessly in a circle. Every stream in the forest gets out of the forest ultimately, and he who follows a rivulet, if he can only follow it long enough, will emerge at last from its labyrinthine dells.

'In the woods,' says Emerson, 'is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair.' How different is this from Dante's feeling about the forest! As the gloom of evening settled down upon the land the views of Dante prevailed with me more and more. I felt that our modern conception of wild nature, simply as a field for the pursuit of health and amusement, or pleasant study, is not a complete conception. The old dread of the wilderness had retained more of the early experience of man, when he found himself, in his weakness and ignorance, in the presence of natural forces that appalled but did not charm his imagination.

The rivulet led us into the densest wood once more. Our easiest path, but a wet one, lay in the very bed of the stream itself, and we floundered along, guided by twilight glimmers on the fortunately shallow water. In this way we proceeded for a long time with considerable rapidity, and might have gone on until night fell in blackness, had we not met with an insurmountable difficulty in a sudden alteration of geological character, which made the rivulet no longer a practicable path. It became closed in between precipitous rocks, and fell in a loud cascade into the depths of a ravine below. Nothing remained of daylight but a feeble greyness in the sky, every near object was invisible, and after some ineffectual attempts to get round the rocky sides of the watercourse I determined to abandon, for that night, all further effort to reach the Val Ste. Véronique. Most fortunately it did not rain, and we were in a perfectly sheltered situation. The constant exercise of our long march (we had been walking for seven hours without intermission) had kept us hitherto safe from cold, but we could not prudently rest without a fire. I had matches and a newspaper in my pocket; we collected a heap of the driest leaves and twigs, and soon had the satisfaction of illuminating the little dell with a cheerful blaze of light, that brought the rocks and nearest trees into the most vigorous relief against the forest gloom and the starless blackness of the sky. Near to us were some resinous firs, and under them Alexis found quantities of large cones, rich in turpentine, which kept our fire up very brilliantly.

I had carefully economised my brandy, and now administered enough of it to give us a little temporary comfort; but we suffered seriously from hunger. Alexis had killed nothing with his gun, or else we might have tried our skill at such rough cookery as the circumstances permitted, but the cartridges he had with him turned out to be very useful to us ultimately. The lesson of the day's misadventure was certainly not lost upon either of us. Alexis declared that in future he would never trust himself in the forest without a mariner's compass in his pocket, and I mentally determined that on all future expeditions we would carry soldiers' rugs and a little supply of provisions. I had at least the consolation of my pipe, which aids a man wonderfully to support privation, and deadens the sense of hunger.

The hours passed one by one, and Alexis was overpowered with sleep. I cut a quantity of heather and covered him with it entirely; after which I sat watching by his bed, and supplying fuel to the fire of our bivouac. There is a death-like silence in the woods on a winter's night, but I consoled myself for the quiescence of the nightingale by the torpor of a great population of vipers which inhabit the crevices of the rocks, and are dangerous things in summer. No sound was audible but the rushing of the rapid stream and the monotonous murmur of its cascades.

About three o'clock in the morning I heard, or fancied that I heard, a movement in the brushwood, quite clearly distinguishable from the music of the rivulet. To this succeeded a crash of breaking branches, and a wild boar, or rather sow, dashed through the water a few yards above our resting-place. She was followed by a well-grown litter, which I took to be rather numerous from the noise they made. On the impulse of the moment I discharged both barrels amongst them, and killed a fine little pig, the rest of the family being immediately lost in the depths of the forest. The discharge aroused Alexis, who was delighted with this exploit, and finished the poor little brute with a hunting-knife of formidable dimensions, which he always carries about him. Here, at any rate, were the materials for a carnivorous breakfast. But this was not the only consequence of the incident. We were startled soon afterwards by the report of a gun in the distance, after too long an interval to be an echo. The inference was obvious; we were in communication with some gun-carrying personage in the forest, either poacher or forester, or possibly a party in search of us from the Val Ste. Véronique.

Instead of attempting to set out in the direction from which the sound proceeded, which would have been useless in the dark entanglement of the forest, I determined to remain quietly where we were, and to increase our bonfire as much as possible, so that the reverberation from it on the clouds above might be strong enough to guide any seeker to our whereabouts. This may be done when the clouds are low, and it is the only advantage I have ever been able to discover in losing yourself on a cloudy night.

Alexis had a good supply of cartridges, so I told him to fire both barrels every five minutes. These signals were regularly answered, and we heard to our satisfaction, by the increasing loudness of the distant guns, that our friends were gradually approaching. It was slow and toilsome work, however, for them in the depth of the forest. We waited an hour and a half, firing regularly, before we heard a long cry from the top of the hill. This we answered, and twenty minutes later the forest was suddenly illuminated by the glare of torches, and a scene was accidentally composed which a painter could scarcely have witnessed without finding material for his art.

The farmer who rented from me whatever little pasture and arable land there was in the Val Ste. Véronique, and my servant François, who, amongst other peculiarities, has a deep-seated unbelief in his master's capacity for taking care of himself (which the present adventure was not exactly calculated to remove), had become very anxious when we did not return at dinner-time, as we had promised. They soon arrived at the conclusion that we had lost ourselves in the forest, and organised, by the help of neighbours (who lived five miles away), a very well-arranged little expedition for our relief. François had taken care at starting to bring provisions in a heavily-charged knapsack, and the first thing he did was to arrange them tidily on the ground. Alexis displayed the wonderful appetite of his age, and exhibited in triumph the ensanguined blade which had finished the little *marcassin*.

Whilst we were breaking our fast our geographical situation was made clear to us. In the first place, this was *not* the stream leading to the Val Ste. Véronique, but another rivulet leading in quite a different direction. Had we been able to follow it we should have emerged from the forest at a point about forty miles from home. We had walked thirty miles, and were fifteen from the Val Ste. Veronique in a straight line. The farmer knew of a forester's hut within a reasonable distance, and proposed that we should go there when it was daylight, as we all needed a few hours' rest to prepare us for our homeward journey.

P. G. HAMERTON.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XVII.—A. FEYEN-PERRIN.

A Sailor's Infancy.

M. FEYEN-PERRIN is a well-known French painter, who has exhibited without intermission for the last fifteen years, and won two medals. He is a Lorrain, having been born at Bey-sur-Seille, a place in Lorraine which has remained French notwithstanding recent annexations. He was a pupil of Léon Cogniet and Yvon.

M. Perrin during the last few years has chiefly painted such subjects as that of the present etching—peasant-women, or wives of fishermen on the sea-shore. His favourite places of study have been Cancale, Roscroft, and the isle of Batz in Brittany. 'Voilà,' he says, 'où je vais chercher mes motifs, toujours un peu mélancoliques.' M. Feyen-Perrin is an accomplished and laborious painter of that department of French art which may be defined as poetical realism—a kind of art on the whole very faithful to nature, and full of love for nature, yet permeated nevertheless with poetical sentiment. I remember, many years ago, walking in the neighbourhood of London with one of the most refined of what, without intending sarcasm, I may call the drawing-room school of English figure-painters, and we saw a fine group of workmen in a field with a fire on the ground, and smoke rising from it in what seemed to me a very paintable manner. 'I don't like those subjects,' my friend said: 'many French painters like them; but I think they forget the real superiorities of the more refined and cultivated classes. After all, a lady is more elegant, and better worth painting, than a peasant-woman ever can be.' Yet, without forgetting the delicate perception of lady-like character which may be clearly displayed in such art as that of the elder Leslie, may we not also admit that painting, perhaps even more than literature, is adapted to the recording of humbler existences, such as those of peasants and sailors? Their simpler histories would be soon told in a novel, and would not occupy the reader with the subtler and more complicated thoughts and feelings which vary the life of an aristocracy; but in painting they fill a canvas as effectively as people of a superior social station. Pictures like this, of the mother by the sea-shore, have quite subject enough for art of a very high character indeed, and they offer abundant opportunity for the exercise of a taste which may be really refined, although it is employed in the arrangement of forms that are not classical and costumes that are independent of the fashion. The simple maternal sentiment, tinged with sadness, as the mother thinks 'I have him yet, but the sea will have him later;' the graceful composition of the limited material; the rich colouring of costume, and sea, and sky; these are enough to interest and occupy a painter.

M. Feyen-Perrin has been an etcher for the last ten years, and has used the etching-needle principally to keep a record of his canvases as they successively left his easel. He has also etched a few independent plates. Some years since he said to me that, considering the great inequality of some artists in their work, he thought the aim of an artist ought not to be so much to make brilliant hits as to reach 'une bonne moyenne.' This piece of advice, or expression of opinion, has remained ever since very distinctly in my memory, and may possibly be of use to others. I may add that M. Feyen-Perrin has himself decidedly attained the *bonne moyenne* which he thought desirable, both as a painter and an aquafortist.

P. G. Hamerton.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS (1723–1792).

IN coming to Reynolds, our discourse settles upon a point it has long turned round about. Our attempt (as to the English school) has hitherto been to apprehend and discriminate various secondary, unequal, or contested talents of the age which occupies us. Now, it is to fix and define our notions of an artist by acclamation presiding over the age. And Sir Joshua did not preside only by the acclamation of those among whom he lived. The dispassionate retrospect of posterity confirms that pre-eminence, and sees in him the school's natural as well as its official head. And more; in the school thus headed it is inclined to see one of those instances where an art has emerged into a phase of its development so signally new and happy as to mark a period in the history of general culture. In the England of the Georges, several of the fine and ingenious arts flourished, and reached a point of admirable native charm. But from the background of these, and of literary culture as well, there stands out one of the greater arts in one of its particular applications; I mean painting, and in particular portrait painting. To take account of portrait painting as it was practised by the first masters of that time—by Gainsborough, the capricious, at his best, and by Reynolds, the steady, almost always—that, we feel, is to take account of one of the choice productions of the human faculties, and bright phenomena of history.

What are the ideas which we are accustomed principally to associate with the art of Reynolds? We think of him first as the great painter of women and children in their living and natural charm. He it was, whatever his contemporaries, reflecting the aspects of the same generation, might succeed in doing according to the same spirit—he it essentially was who found out the way of expressing, by magic of pencil and colour, the magic of womanly and childish grace, and flooded the art of England with that ideal so exquisitely real, the English lady and her brood as they unfeignedly are, in every one of their moods and pastimes. Of course he was also a memorable painter of men, and his Lord Heathfields and Admiral Keppels and Colonel Tarletons are hardly less distinguished examples of the painter's craft than his Lady Cockburns or his Mrs. Stanleys; but the men do not enter for so much as the women and children into our idea of him and our affection towards him; their fine expressions of valour, dignity, or gentlemanliness are nothing so new nor so delightful as the expressions of infinitely varied grace in the others.

Grace, says the philosopher, is beauty in movement. And what sets beauty—structural beauty—on movements of gracefulness, is a certain constitution and admixture of the inward spirit. Where will and impulse, contending forces according to man's common admixture, are blended in a harmonious and habitual instinct of sweet behaviour, there you have grace in every outward motion. Now motion—an act of movement—the painter's art cannot represent. But that formed outward habit of the person and countenance it can represent, which comes from the repetition of amiable movements; and that, not only in the general posture and air, but down to the most incalculable subtleties in the disposition of the expressive muscles and their surfaces. Nay, a Reynolds, a genius born above all things to perceive and perpetuate fine shades of grace, can go further than that. He can borrow from Rembrandt the mystery of light and shade; he can learn from the Venetians the evanescence of breathing outlines and transition of kindling colours, and from Correggio something mingled of the two; he can combine all these with his own airy sleight of hand, and by the combination can give to those inert irremovable tracings as it were the very vibrations of life's own exquisite mobility. This air of vanishing, and seeming to vibrate and breathe, is painting's highest consummation in the art of translating one order of appearances into another, an unstable and momentary order in time into a stable and abiding one in space. It was Correggio who by his skill in this, and by his sweet luxury of line and grouping, had taken traditional rank long ago as the sovereign master of grace. And Correggio in his own country had engendered a long succession of imitators, men of weak reins, in whom the attempt to ape their ancestor had sunk not slowly into all the perversions of insipidity and affectations of the simperer. But in the days when that Italian line had reached its feeblest, Correggio found in another race disciples of a stronger mettle. We know how this master was in the mouth of every dauber and *dilettante* in the eighteenth century. He was also a model for its first geniuses; upon whom Romney avowedly built himself, and whose secret—as we have said—Reynolds talking less about it made his own. With all reverence for the master of the Parma cupolas, we have the right to say that Reynolds, who neither possessed nor would have had use for any part of the other's vast science of decorative and perspective designing, was his equal in those bland and fugitive and tender parts of grace. They are not the hosts of a joyous alluring heaven, they are not the amorous ranks of an Olympus little distinguishable from that, they are modest figures of ripening maidens and serene dames, and above all, of happy creatures in the first soft flush and radiance of motherhood, clustered about with the soft and flushing brood that 'that throws out flames of beauty'* at every shift of rosy interlacement and constraining appeal of love: these they are, whose lineaments are so made to breathe and vibrate, in the new art, with such a perfect and separate simplicity of natural life in each personage of child or woman. For the moment, our attention is not for the main resemblances and attitudes in Reynolds's work, nor its obvious points of style; the simplicity and purity of affectionate sentiment; the penetrating play of individuality as to the human part of each personage; and the tendency, as to the dress and accessories, towards a moderate degree of abstraction, and a generalising which is partly an affair of sketchiness, and partly of principle and ideal.† All these matters (and each of them is food for a chapter) being given and apprehended, the special flower of the magic lies in a sense of things that almost elude apprehension—in the way of working the old miracle of the mixture of red and white; the half assertion and half denial of a lovely lost outline of brow and face in the shadow; the poise, roundness, and pearly shading of a throat beneath cheek and ear; the straying and disappearance of a downy ring of hair, the moulding and laying together of the lips in subtle and sweet consent with the eyes' regard, and fall and conduct of the lids; the sense of warmth, and of weight and lightness, with which a delicate hand lies passive upon lap or book. Apprehension does all this almost elude? half imperceptible to the sense is this flower of exquisiteness? still less, then, are words a match for it; still less can written history hope anything but to give a few clumsy hints, and send the inquirer to go and exercise his senses upon the visible reality of that pictured grace.

The cycles of art which have had most hold upon the minds of men have embodied the highest thoughts and interests of the generations which produced them. The high and moving cycles of the old Greek and the Renaissance Italian arts dealt for the most part with images of beings conceived of as more than mortal, and dealt with them in a temper of corresponding reverence and exaltation, or what—since it was the word used by the Greeks of Pheidias—we may justly call enthusiasm. The enthusiasm of the Greek was for the beauty of human beings, refined upon sufficiently to satisfy his idea of gods, and coupled with a sentiment of dignified serenity and repose. The enthusiasm of the Italian was for the beauty both of human beings and external nature; but his religion had begun by condemning both; and his art by being the servant of that religion: so that the enthusiasm had a great struggle before it could realise itself in the art; and always carried the mark of the struggle, even when Christian art had raised those Immortals of the antique conception to a near equality of reverence with her own, in a sentiment of agitation and wistfulness which Greece did not know, and in the many fashions both fantastical and tender which bespeak a perplexed experience and an enriched imagination. Of those two enthusiasms, the two great cycles of art are the products. Modern art has never known a similar temper. There are prophets and pioneers who say that when art shall have once inspired itself frankly, solely, and devoutly from humanity and nature as they actually and experimentally are, then it will once more live with the life of a large consentaneous enthusiasm, and modern art will produce results, not indeed of the old ideal beauty, but of a still higher value to mankind.* That time has not arrived, and that product may be left out of account. Since the exhaustion of the Renaissance impulse, art has groped between the real and the imaginary, having, in both fields alike, its sincerities at one time and its affectations at another, its failures now and its successes then; but never the old high certainty, backed on the unanimous thoughts of a race and of an age.

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* The phrase is a pretty one of Northcote's, the most distinguished among Sir Joshua's pupils.

† Speaking, in his seventh discourse, of those appearances which appeal to permanent and time-honoured inclinations of taste (or, as he in this place calls them, prejudices), and those which appeal to temporary and short-lived inclinations, Reynolds says:—'He, therefore, who in his practice of portrait-painting wishes to dignify his subject, which we will suppose to be a lady, will not paint her in the modern dress, the familiarity of which alone is sufficient to destroy all dignity. He takes care that his work shall correspond to those ideas and that imagination which he knows will regulate the judgment of others; and, therefore, dresses his figures something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity, and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness. By this conduct his works correspond with those prejudices which we have in favour of what we continually see; and the relish of the antique simplicity corresponds with what we may call the more learned and scientific prejudice.' The well-known figure of Miss Leigh, carving her name on a tree in her dress of close-fitting tunic and sandals, may be taken as an example of Reynolds's manner when he most nearly carries out his own prescription. Although, in the main, the passage may be taken as applying to artists more strictly studious of 'dignity' than Reynolds himself, yet generalise and abstract he does upon the contemporary costume in almost every case, with an incomparably fine instinct, and a corresponding result in the relish of a simplicity which is scarcely indeed 'antique,' but affects us with a quite original savour and delightfulness.

When the student finds himself in presence of any of those dispersed phases and manifestations of modern art which belong to the class of its successes, he wishes naturally to gauge as well as he can the value which the bright phenomenon possesses in the course of history, its power upon the human spirit as compared with other phases which have occupied him. Now, the student enamoured of either or both of those great cycles of the human genius of which I have spoken, the Greek and the Italian, is apt to entertain a contempt for phases of art which either deal with less momentous conceptions than they, or seem to have been inspired by sentiments of less enthusiasm (and in the one thing he will commonly see a consequence of the other). He will despise Dutch painting in spite of its accomplishment. Show him the English painting of the last century, and, acknowledging its charm in portraits, he will complain of its weakness in the higher flights. He will be slow to acknowledge any approach to equality with the sublime arts he bows down before, in an art which flounders in the region of the sublime and moves gracefully only in the region of the everyday. He will not consent that an art should shine most where its desire and need of shining are least. Greek sculpture, he will feel, adequate to its divine or heroic themes, could ennoble individual portraiture when presently it condescended to that. Italian painting, profoundly attractive and impressive in its religious and mythologic dreams, could also attract and impress when it employed itself upon the representation of individuals. But that an art like ours of a hundred years ago, which makes him smile when it attempts either to resuscitate the grandeurs of the past or to create new ones of its own, and pleases him in the representation of individuals alone—that this should be anything to think of as he thinks of the work of the elder periods, is a thing he can scarcely bring himself to feel. Something to this effect I attempted to say at the close of some observations, in these pages, on the spirit of the designers who, coming after Reynolds, occupied themselves with children. The absence of 'passion' in the art of this age was the point then in question. In a connection more immediately germane to the present, and with his style a match for Joshua's pencil, Mr. Ruskin cries: 'How wide the interval between this gently trivial humour, guided by the wave of a feather, or arrested by the enchantment of a smile,—and the habitual dwelling of the great Greeks and Florentines among the beings and the interests of the eternal world!' Anon, in the midst of justice done to the 'modesty and sense,' the 'discretion and simpleheartedness' of the English painters who knew their own tranquil powers, Mr. Ruskin speaks of that as a 'faultful temper' which narrowed the scope of their achievements, and says 'There is probably some strange weakness in the painter, and some fatal error in the age, when in thinking over the examples of their greatest work, for some type of culminating loveliness or veracity, we remember no expression either of religion or heroism, and instead of reverently naming a Madonna di San Sisto, can only whisper, modestly, "Mrs. Pelham feeding chickens."'

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* I allude particularly to the ideas of Proudhon and his disciples, in connection with the Realist school of modern France; and I think many of the ideas published by Mr. Ruskin point by implication to a similar belief.

To judge of the difference as fault, weakness or error, will not concern us here. Only, to get at the broad comparative judgment we seek of the value of Sir Joshua's work, and so of his place among the company of the world's artists, it is necessary to look at two matters beyond the work and its qualities as work, and the character of the objects it represents. We shall have to see the relation which those representations bear to the age, and to the significance in general history of that which, in the age, they represent. We shall have also to settle the question of enthusiasm, or exalted feelings, and to think whether, if enthusiasm is here proved wanting, there is any other sentiment or combination of sentiments capable of raising the work of the school or the artist they animate into a co-equal dignity with that which, where enthusiasm is, we all acknowledge.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

(*To be continued.*)

PAINTING BY LAMPLIGHT.

THE following interesting letter is taken from Mr. Neal Solly's 'Memoir of David Cox,'* to which we hope to call further attention in an early number. 'The approach of winter,' says Mr. Solly, 'hardly interfered at all with Cox's work, as he painted a great deal by lamplight, and his long experience generally enabled him to avoid mistakes in the colour. He used always to like to finish his pictures by daylight, but with respect to the effect, he has repeatedly said that he could manage that and the light and shade quite as well, or better, by artificial light than he could in the daytime.'

The letter is dated November 18, 1842, and is addressed to his son:—

'Yesterday was so fine I went to Birmingham, and afterwards called and dined with my good friend Roberts. I got home by five to tea, and worked at a coloured drawing by lamplight. I find that what I do by lamplight in general turns out better by daylight than what I do by daylight. I am speaking now more of the effect, but I have been very lucky in my colouring. I have in many of my late studies been most fortunate in mountainous scenes; they certainly afford scope for more effect, and sentiment in the effect; and I have been three nights in studying one subject. In a short time I may alter my feeling, and be altogether as much pleased with very extensive views, as a short time ago I was for lane scenes. All are good, but each requires a good deal of thought. Try by lamplight a subject in charcoal, and don't be afraid of darks, and work the subject throughout with charcoal in the darks, middle tint and half, and with some very spirited touches in parts to give a marking. When you have done all this, have your colours quite soft, and colour upon the charcoal. Get all the depth of the charcoal, and be not afraid of the colour.

'When you look at it by daylight, and clean it with bread, you will find a number of light parts which have been left when the colour would not exactly adhere over the charcoal. For a distant mountain I have used cobalt and vermilion, and in the greyer part I mix a little lake and a small quantity of yellow ochre with the cobalt. In the middle distance I work each part separately; in fact, something like mosaic work. The foreground the same, taking care to leave the reflected lights clear for a distant cool or bluish tint. I use very similar colours for the middle distance as for the three (query, foreground?), for green, indigo, lake, and gamboge, with its varieties; occasionally for the rocks, cobalt, vermilion, and yellow ochre, and sometimes lake instead of the vermilion. In the foreground I use indigo and van-brown, and indigo and brown-pink. Sometimes add sepia to the indigo and brown-pink. I use for the grey in the sky cobalt and vermilion, and for the more neutral grey, cobalt and light red.

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* Memoir of David Cox. By N. Neal Solly. With Selections from his Correspondence and numerous Photographs from his Drawings. London: Chapman and Hall. 1873.

'DAVID COX.'

It is interesting to compare the above with the practice of another great English landscape painter. In a well-known passage of his discourse on Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds says:—'We must not forget whilst we are on this subject, to make some remarks on his custom of painting by night, which confirms what I have already mentioned,—his great affection to his art, since he could not amuse himself in the evening by any other means so agreeable to himself. I am, indeed, much inclined to believe that it is a practice very advantageous and improving to an artist, for by this means he will acquire a new and higher perception of what is great and beautiful in nature. By candlelight, not only objects appear more beautiful, but from their being in a greater breadth of light and shadow, as well as having a greater breadth and uniformity of colour, nature appears in a higher style, and even the flesh seems to take a higher and richer tone of colour. Judgment is to direct us in the use to be made of this method of study; but the method itself is, I am very sure, advantageous. I have often imagined that the two great colourists, Titian and Correggio, though I do not know that they painted by night, formed their high ideas of colouring from the effects of objects by this artificial light; but I am more assured that, whoever attentively studies the first and best manner of Guercino, will be convinced that he either painted by this light, or formed his manner on this conception.'

Gainsborough, it would seem, went much further than David Cox, not merely painting by night, from sketches previously made or from imagination, but even preferring to throw an artificial light upon the models which he made use of for his compositions. 'From the fields he brought into his painting-room stumps of trees, weeds, and animals of various kinds; and designed them not from memory, but immediately from the objects. He even framed a kind of model of landscapes on his table, composed of broken stones, dried herbs, and pieces of looking-glass, which he magnified and improved into rocks, trees, and water.'

Reynolds adds, 'How far this latter practice may be useful in giving hints the professors of landscape can best determine. Like every other technical practice, it seems to me wholly to depend on the general talent of him who uses it. Such methods may be nothing better than contemptible and mischievous trifling, or they may be aids. I think, upon the whole, unless we constantly refer to real nature, that practice may be more likely to do harm than good. I mention it only as it shows the solicitude and extreme activity which he had about everything that related to his art; that he wished to have his objects embodied, as it were, and distinctly before him; that he neglected nothing that could keep his faculties in exercise; and derived hints from every sort of combination.'

There can be little doubt that with each painter the custom arose in the first instance from the same cause, 'his great affection to his art.' Even in the last years of his life David Cox would often spend the whole evening in painting. 'If alone, or nearly so, and the evenings were long, he lighted his lamp and went to work again; this time downstairs in his sitting-room, where, taking up a sheet of rough paper, which he delighted to paint on, and striking out some grand effect of sunshine or shadow, of cloud and tempest, which his quickened fancy enabled him to conceive, he produced what he called a cartoon ; a subject to be treated with greater care, and in another form, on a future occasion. Many of these cartoons were made during the long nights of autumn and winter, and were exceedingly fine things, requiring but slight alteration of their colour by the light of day to render them perfect works of art.'

'THE STORM,' AFTER GEORGE MORLAND.

OUR illustration of Sir Joshua Reynolds will accompany the second part of Mr. Colvin's paper on that artist, to be published next month. For this month, we offer to our readers a lithograph after George Morland, showing his rapid and spirited manner in one of the sketchier and more turbulent class of his rustic compositions. The criticism of Morland, taken in connection with his brother-in-law, James Ward, will come in its place a little later in the series to which the present illustration belongs.

SOME ARTISTIC ASPECTS OF LUXURY.

PROBABLY there is none of the standing excuses for luxury more generally accepted or more respectable than the plea that it is necessary to provide employment for artists; and in one sense the plea is indisputable. If art is to exist artists must live, and if art is to flourish there must be artists who live well ; and for this it is necessary that very large sums should be habitually spent upon superfluities, in order that large sums should be available for a superfluity which is hardly an object of universal desire. But it is hard to say what luxury is if it is not a habit of spending largely on superfluities, which habit is admitted to be necessary to the prosperity of art. Therefore it may be taken for proved that a flourishing artistic period will also be, in some sense, a luxurious period : we may even go further, and grant that a luxurious period will be an artistic period in this sense, that among other luxuries there will be a demand for works of art.

But when we come to examine the notion of luxury more narrowly we see that this requires qualification : for instance, luxury clearly includes the carrying of the material arrangements of daily life to an ideal pitch of perfection. Now there are many of these which ought to be invisible, many more which ought to be unobtrusive; expenditure on both is obviously so much taken from art. Then, again, there are the further questions, whether the class which is to patronise art among other luxuries is numerous or select, whether its habits are fixed or fluctuating, and the like.

If we turn to history to throw light upon these distinctions, the first thing that strikes us is that the great epochs of artistic expansion have been epochs when a community of simple habits has been suddenly enriched. Greece in the age of Pericles, Florence in the age of Giotto, Bagdad under the early Caliphs, all satisfy this condition, and each became the starting-point of an artistic movement which had a long development of its own, and exercised a fruitful influence on the future. Rome acquired her wealth much more slowly, and there was time for many elaborate comforts to become necessaries before the age of splendour began, and the splendour was not spontaneous when it came. And this seems to be the reason why the great expansion of English society in the reign of Elizabeth did not issue in a great expansion of the arts. Such expansion as there was took the direction of domestic architecture, and the arts dependent on it, rather than painting or sculpture. There is one very striking exception to this rule; the Venetian school of painting reached its perfection when Venice had long been rich and luxurious, and after one great school of architecture had declined and another had culminated. Nor is Venice the only exception, though it is the greatest. Murillo and Velasquez come after the moment when the gold of the Indies gave Spain an exuberant sense of power, and supremacy had been reached and had been passed, and when the material decline had set in irretrievably. But neither of these exceptions can be said to traverse the rule as a whole. Great as they were, the great schools of Venice and Spain were not seminal schools like the Athenian school of sculpture, or the Florentine school of painting, or the French and English schools of architecture in the thirteenth century. So that it seems almost truer to fall back upon the traditional declamation about luxury: to call it a weed which has no affinity with art except that it requires the same rich soil, which is apt to spring up with art and choke it generally before art can flower, and always before it can bear fruit—only declamation leads to nothing in the intellectual sphere; and as art was made for man, not man for art, it is hardly likely in this instance to lead to much in the ethical sphere. It is more to the purpose to assume that luxury is, in our own day, one of the fixed conditions under which all art must be produced, and which only the highest art can transcend, and then inquire in what directions it tends to impede the artist, and in what directions it can be trained to aid him.

It is obvious at starting that luxury tends to hinder art more when it is diffused than when it is concentrated, and this applies both to persons and things; it is easier to give artistic value to one of the material appliances of daily life than to many; it is easier to do this for a set of many such appliances which is to be used by one than for a pattern which is to be reproduced for many. There has been a background of bareness and roughness to relieve most, if not all, the best schools even of ornamental art; and if the rich completeness of the life of the Alhambra and of other verdant oases of Mahometan culture seem to constitute an exception, it is an exception which proves the rule, for it is due to the fundamental simplicity of Mahometan civilisation. As it affects modern art, luxury is both diffused and complicated; there is a constantly increasing class whose life has to be appointed on a scale of more and more elaborate elegance. The process has gone so far already that anybody who desired to live plainly would find it impossible. Those who preach against the tyrannous invasion of upholstery too commonly forget that the choice is not between the luxury of to-day and primitive simplicity, or even primitive severity and rudeness; it is between the luxury of to-day and the *débris* of the luxuries of ten and twenty and fifty years ago, which is certain to be ill assorted, which is certain to make no appeal to the æsthetic sense of the present: and, after all, that æsthetic sense has profited in some measure by the too extensive and too miscellaneous education which it has been receiving since the days of Horace Walpole.

There is another difficulty due to the mere multiplication of business: nobody wishes to have exactly the same things as his neighbours; nobody wishes to make the same; and besides, it is necessary for each maker to give purchasers something to choose by in his own wares; and all this leads to a multiplication of small variations, which is unfavourable to the perfection of a single type. Nor does this process favour the origination of new types, for the variations are confined within very narrow limits: any real novelty would jar upon the tame, finished prettiness, which is the minimum that a cultivated eye exacts, and at the same time the maximum which an eye that has to be served by other hands commonly sees its way to attain. And this dead level of ornamentation, which is intended to supply the want of ornament, not only hampers decorative art, it makes the higher art increasingly motiveless. We are so used to pictures painted to look their best on an easel, and to water-colour drawings which it is a pity to take out of a portfolio to be framed, that it hardly occurs to us that on the whole it would be more rational if they were conceived as ornaments for the walls of the rooms, in which they would always be displayed, or even like many of the best works of Benozzo Gozzoli, as decorations for the top and sides of a clothes-chest. As it is, paintings decorate a room so little that it is not surprising to find them replaced by engravings which, so far as ornament goes, are seldom if ever worth the paper they hide. In fact, if a modern room were to be made the subject of a picture of an interior, the first step, in nine cases out of ten, would be to clear out all the paintings or engravings with which it has been adorned by the taste of its proprietor. Yet the proprietor could do no better: first, he had to make the appearance of his room satisfactory, then he had to provide the eye with some isolated points of real interest—perhaps it was only in the latter that he exercised a serious choice, and though each system of decoration destroys the effect of the other, it would be too much to expect him to keep to one. The same causes which tell upon houses tell upon the dress of at least one sex; ladies are habitually overdressed, because they must never look shabby or dowdy; and this danger can be avoided by a profusion of frills and flounces and vandykes, which make it impossible for a dress to fall into graceful folds, but do instead of graceful folds on those too numerous occasions when a dress left to itself would hang limply, lie like an extinguisher over the fulness of the petticoat. It is probably safe to assert that ideal art will always be more or less academical while the dress of men is shapeless and the dress of women graceless, or at best piquant and showy, without being offensive.

Another difficulty of art in an age at once luxurious and cultivated is the tendency to imitation, which is produced both by the curiosity of artists and by the caprices of the public. If we were less luxurious, we should be willing to wait till artists produced spontaneously; if we were less cultivated, we should have no choice but waiting, and should not be able to set them to reproduce as much as suited us in any part that caught our fancy: nor would they be able to console their indifference to their results by their success in a capricious adaptation of ancient effects and processes.

All these difficulties of the artist of a luxurious age may be reduced to one: the demand is artificially stimulated to a point so far in advance of the supply, that the supply becomes diluted, not to say adulterated, and though the demand is excessive and constant it is not intense enough to be a stimulus, for it is a demand for what is only half wanted. Here, if anywhere, there is an opening for a remedy; a demand which is only half sincere can easily be directed. If artists knew their own minds entirely it would hardly matter that the public do not know theirs.

It is quite certain that all the free art which is practised now was originally evolved from decorative art; perhaps it is more than probable that its motives and processes are, or soon will be, exhausted—already we can trace the approach of this in the increasing attention to purely technical achievement. The point must be at hand, if it has not been reached already, at which a new departure is desirable, while there is still enough genuine impulse and aspiration left to go very far if they were released from the incubus of the uniform completeness which we exact without desiring in familiar mediums. Such a new departure would be possible if it were generally understood that the development of luxury ought to lead to an enormous expansion of decorative art, on such a scale as to raise a presumption in any individual case where the artistic impulse manifested itself that decorative art of some kind was its proper sphere. The first advantage of this would be that art would be as it is in Japan, a record of impressions; for impressions are always decorative in proportion to their truthfulness and refinement, whereas a full-length record of our knowledge of nature has always to be carried beyond decoration. It is true that the expression of an ideal has to be carried as far as the expression of knowledge, but nine-tenths of the labour of contemporary art go to the expression of knowledge, not to the expression of ideals. Other advantages would be, that the new processes would suggest new compromises with the infinite complexity and variety of nature, and so emphasize some new aspects out of the many which most of us have still to learn to see, and that the natural differences between what different people see will not be suppressed, as they are now, for fear of raising the importunate question of plausibility. The grace and spirit and delicacy of Japanese work appeal to many who never recognise its intense though fragmentary truth. The difficulty of multiplication would still, to some extent, remain; but if inventiveness were turned in that direction we might hope that the processes which are now applied to the reproduction of free art might serve to popularise decorative art, and so much the more completely as simplicity is one of the perfections of all naturalistic decoration. If our walls and curtains were, even at second-hand, the record of the fresh impressions and the graceful fancies of artists of our own day, instead of being encumbered with mechanical patterns abstracted painfully from the fancies of artists of long ago, we might hope to get our chairs and tables thoroughly mechanical; if one manufactory with half-a-dozen patterns, all plain ones, could but get a monopoly, we should be at peace, and perhaps might be mercifully inspired to show our joy and gratitude in the same fashion as the Florentines in Dante's youth, when the young men and maidens went about in companies of a thousand or more all dressed alike. When that point was reached, the very refinement of luxury would make frugality once more possible.

G. A. SIMCOX.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

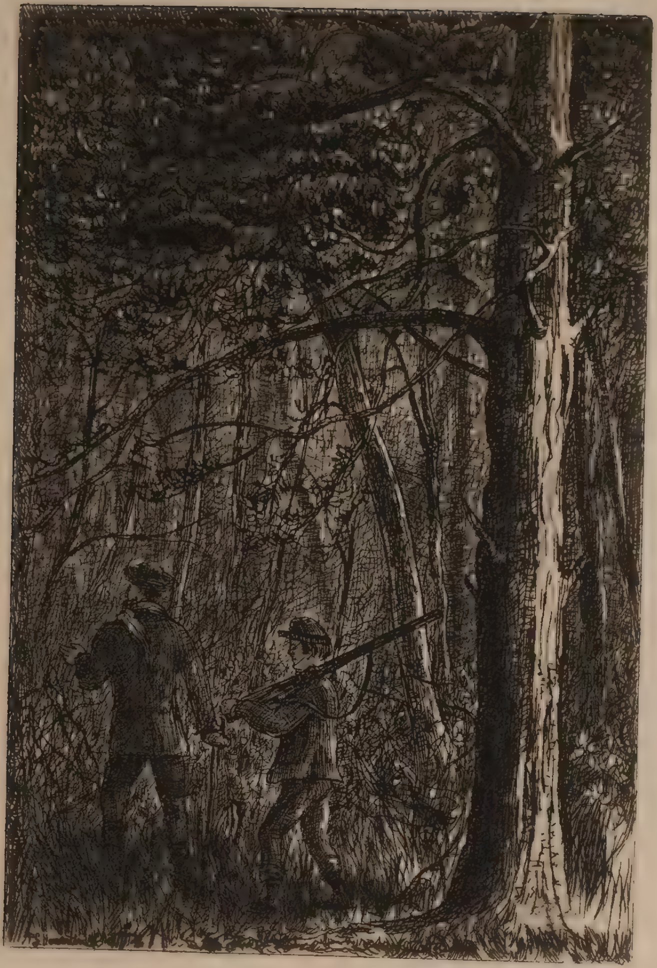
LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER IV.

WE lay round our fire in the forest during the hours that remained of the night, but at earliest dawn we started for the hut which I mentioned at the end of the last chapter of this narrative. The road to it passed through a narrow gorge, so enclosed by steep hills, densely wooded with young oak, that it was impossible to see more than two or three hundred yards in any direction. After walking in single file for the distance of about a league we came suddenly upon an abrupt turn in the little dell, and there it ended, for a barrier of hill rose directly in front of us, so steep as to be almost inaccessible. There was a little open space of natural meadow, and on one side of this stood the forester's hut, scarcely distinguishable from the dense vegetation that surrounded it, for the builder had used material ready to his hand, and simply constructed a sort of wigwam of young oak-trunks and branches, with a thatch of gorse that covered both roof and wall. A tiny rill had been artificially directed to a spout of hollow wood, and fell in a little cascade of the most perfect purity on the stony ground in front of the cabin, trickling afterwards amongst the pebbles, and finding its way to the bit of meadow below. No human dwelling could be more humble and primitive than this was. In the remotest wilds of America there may be houses equally primitive, but there can be no habitations nearer in structure and conception to man's earliest ideal of a home. The inhabitants were already awake, and we had immediate access to the interior. There were a couple of low bedsteads, made roughly from young trees, and covered with sheets of canvas. There were two or three shelves, with nothing on them but a little of the commonest earthenware, and the rest of the furniture included nothing that Socrates would have rejected as unnecessary. It is just possible that Diogenes might have discovered a superfluity.

The inhabitants consisted of the forester and his son, a lad of fifteen, who seemed at least three years younger. They welcomed us with a sort of surprised politeness, natural under the circumstances; but we told our story, and this soon led to a more frank and intimate acquaintance. Our new host lived too far from the Val Ste. Véronique to know very much about our extremity of the forest, and my name appeared to be quite unknown to him, but he treated us with an equal hospitality in which there was a great deal of simple dignity. The conversation turned upon our adventure, and when we told him about the little wild boar, and displayed the victim, he gave a peculiar whistle, and immediately a beast of the same species, a little older, came from a dark corner in the hut and sought his caresses like a dog. He had killed the sow in the forest and taken this youngling home, at first with no definite intention of adopting it, but the creature had become so familiar that it now formed part of his household. The wild boar, if taken young, is very easily domesticated, and capable of strong attachment to its human friends. The men present immediately began to mention other instances of boars that had been taken and brought up in the same way, and one was mentioned which regularly followed its master to the village church, and would not be excluded, but came at last, by the toleration of the curé, to hear mass like a Christian; till finally it grew to an alarming size, and was sold to a travelling menagerie for the sum of seventy francs. What a transition for a poor creature, that had loved its friends and enjoyed great freedom in their society, to be taken suddenly away from all affectionate intercourse, and shut up in a narrow cage, and carried from fair to fair like poor Gulliver in Brobdignag, but without the tender care of Glumdalclitch! As for the future fate of this one, its owner admitted with sorrow that the time must ultimately arrive when it would be necessary to have him 'bled;' but when that day came he hoped he might be at a distance, and not be a witness of the sacrifice.

The society of people who live with nature, though it may be wanting in the variety of thought and experience that we find only in great cities, has usually some elements of interest, and this forester, Jean Bouleau, was very observant in his own way, and half a naturalist. I learned afterwards that he had the reputation of being a wonderfully skilful poacher; and indeed a man in his situation, buried in the depths of a vast forest, with no neighbours but wild animals, would naturally be tempted to lead the life of a trapper. His ostensible trade was woodcutting, and he worked at it sufficiently to give a fair colour and pretext to his existence; but a hardy and adventurous spirit desires other excitements than constant physical drudgery, and this man found in poaching exactly the excitement that he needed. The reader may ask how a man so well known to be a poacher could go on year after year without exciting hostility enough



PG Hamerton

to drive him out of the country, but the difficulty in this part of France is, that however strong the evidence against poachers, the magistrates will not convict. One conviction certainly did take place some years ago, but it was owing to an extraordinary absence of tact on the part of the poacher himself, who had not yet learned the refinements of his trade. The President affected to interrogate him with great severity, on which the prisoner was simple enough to answer 'What? don't you know me? I'm the man that supplies your own kitchen with game. It was I who sold that hare to your cook only last week.' 'Silence, prisoner!' shouted both the President and the *Procureur impérial*, and the man was condemned at once; not for poaching, but for indiscretion. The simple truth is, that the poachers are the regular purveyors of all who have a taste for game; and as magistrates and other official persons know that their kitchens are supplied by persons of this class, their lenity may be counted upon if only the prisoner has the tact to play his part in the little comedy so as not to compromise his betters. Even the dignitaries of the Church are not proof against the temptations of good eating, and sometimes consume viands which have not been come by either legally or honestly. There was a certain Bishop, now dead, who took his share of responsibility in these matters with a pleasant humour. Wishing to eat venison when not quite in season, he sent half the body of the deer that tempted him as a present to the Prefect, who lived in the same town, and accompanied the gift by the following little note,—'Partageons la responsabilité: chargez-vous du temporel; je me charge du spirituel.'

Sometimes a few sportsmen unite to prosecute poachers, but their efforts encounter the perpetual difficulty that the lawyers and magistrates have—private feelings of the tenderest regard for the clever and adventurous men who supply the greatest delicacies of their tables. Some sportsmen heard that a great game dinner was being cooked at a certain restaurant, and they required the *Procureur impérial* to give a warrant for seizure. Armed with this and accompanied by the police, they entered the kitchen where the preparations were busily going forward. On the spits before the fire were quails, partridges, pheasants—evidence enough against the master of the establishment; but he simply answered that, although the dinner might not be legal, for the game was not killed in season, still it would be useless to prosecute him, because the feast had been ordered by the President of the Assizes himself. The zeal of the *trouble-fête* sportsmen cooled at once on receiving this piece of information, and they desisted. The plain truth is, that conscientiousness in game-preserving is almost entirely unknown in France, and the only people who desire a different state of things are the large land-owners, who are not powerful enough to alter the habits of the whole nation. Every town of importance enough for the interchange of hospitality is sure to maintain a good many isolated *braconniers*, who supply its larders with game both in and out of what may be legally the season. They are less what an Englishman understands by the word poacher, than hunters and trappers by profession, like their brethren in the forests of America. There is still great variety of game in France, and no country could be more favourable to it if preservation of any serious kind could be resorted to; but under present circumstances, when it is impossible to protect it efficiently, it would be impossible also to purchase game without the assistance of the *braconnier*. The land-owners do not sell, they have only enough for their own tables; the sportsmen who live in towns, and consider themselves rewarded if, after a day's march, they return home with a single partridge, are not skilful enough to do more than procure themselves a luxury from time to time: so there is clearly a sort of need for the true professional *braconnier*, who is to ordinary sportsmen what the artist is to the amateur, and can get game in quantity enough to supply the market regularly, though often at high prices. The skill of these men is often wonderful, but no one becomes a *braconnier* who has not a strong natural aptitude for the chase, with all those animal instincts and physical powers which are necessary to an incessant warfare against the cunning and swiftness of the brute. These instincts and powers gain greatly both in delicacy and strength by incessant use, and after ten or fifteen years of a life in the woods such a man as Jean Bouleau becomes a hunting animal, the most patient and cunning of all animals, and one of the most enduring. If there is a fish in the river, or a quadruped in the woods, he will have that fish, he will have that quadruped, when the common sportsman might as hopefully propose to himself to arrest the wild swans in their longest and loftiest travelling in the upper air. I found afterwards that this man was never called by his own name, but was known in the forest and its outskirts as 'the Weasel,' and by this *sobriquet* we will speak of him in the present narrative.

There is an instinct in the boyish nature by which it is strongly attracted to whatever is primitive in man, and I observed without surprise that Alexis fraternised almost immediately with the Weasel, even before he became aware of the man's remarkable talents and accomplishments. It immediately occurred to me, that if Jean Bouleau were guilty of no greater crime than supplying the larders of rich citizens with game, which they offered him the strongest temptations to procure for them, merely because they had not skill and endurance enough to procure it for themselves, I need not throw any hindrance in the way of an intimacy of this kind, which would be an education for Alexis in habits of self-reliance and observation, and the best possible introduction to the study of natural history.

The Weasel was an excellent specimen of the race of men that he belonged to, as pure a Celt as any in all France. We, who belong to the taller races of mankind, are rather apt to undervalue the qualities of the Celt. His superiorities may be summed up in rapidity of intelligence and of action. The Weasel was in stature even below the low standard of his race, but he was beautifully built, with legs and arms fit for a painter's model, and, notwithstanding his labour as a woodcutter, the hands retained an almost feminine delicacy. The hair on his head was richly abundant, black, and curly; but the beard was scanty, like that of an adolescent. The eyes were like the eyes of a wild animal, quite clear and brilliant, but unpleasantly rapid in their movements. He spoke in the most good-humoured manner, and after the first quarter of an hour became extremely polite to us. 'Would we not accept something to eat? he would do what he could for our entertainment.' Having kept a little inn some years before, he confessed to some skill in cookery, and produced as a specimen of it a large earthen pan filled with *civet de lièvre*. He had wine, too, rather rough to the palate, but sound—*vin du pays*, grown in a little experimental vineyard on the outskirts of the forest, with sufficiently good soil and a southern aspect, but much too high above the level of the sea for any delicacy of flavour. There were goats' cheeses of his own making, which were excellent; and to conclude, he gave us coffee and a dram of *genièvre*, which consisted of brandy made from pressed grapes, in which he had steeped berries from the juniper bushes that abounded in the forest. These luxuries, and the cigarettes he smoked with us afterwards, were quite enough to prove that the Weasel did not really and truly belong to the class of woodcutters by his habits (for they live like ascetics), nor did he appear in the least anxious to go to his daily labour. His earlier life as an innkeeper, and his frequent visits to the city, where he ate in the kitchens of his patrons, had given him a taste for good living, which may have been one of the incentives to his career as a *braconnier*.

It became evident in the course of our conversation that his ignorance of the Val Ste. Véronique had been affected, probably to shield himself from the suspicion of poaching on my estate. The truth was, that the whole of the forest was known to this man, and probably to him only. He could find his way through its intricate hills and valleys by day or night, in fog or sunshine; *he* needed no mariner's compass, but went about guided by the marvellous instinct of locality. His talk about the forest interested us exceedingly, and he offered to guide us if ever we felt disposed to pursue our explorations. It was an offer not to be rejected for the future, but for the time being we felt more disposed to return homewards with our relieving party. After a rest of three hours at the Weasel's cabin we set off on our long march, and arrived at home before night-fall. The principal result of our adventure was a feeling of the awfulness of the forest, which was partially diminished by subsequent familiarity, but never quite effaced. We never set out on any excursion afterwards without a mariner's compass and a small supply of provisions.

CHAPTER V.

THE weather, which had been gloomy since our arrival in the Val Ste. Véronique, now became more cheerful, and as we were more settled in our new home the beauty of nature grew more evident and more satisfying. In times of mental disturbance from whatever cause, from the pressure of affairs, or anxieties, or sorrow, we do not see nature clearly, nor do we see it either in the dulness of *ennui.* A certain middle state is needed between anxiety and too stagnant calm, in which the mind does not either suffer from the sense of pressure on the one hand, nor yet, on the other, become dulled from the want of use. Every day my sorrow produced less of disturbing pain, and knowing the past to be wholly beyond my power, I resolved to live as much as possible in the present. This was rendered the easier by the companionship of Alexis, who, with the natural buoyancy and activity of his age, soon entered with great eagerness into the pleasures of our new existence, whilst he willingly accepted the studious discipline which I had felt to be necessary for both of us.

The month of December was passed in indoor studies, with occasional excursions in the forest, undertaken rather for sport than observation. Few incidents of importance occurred to us during these wintry weeks. The neighbourhood of our own valley was frequently visited by wild boars, which of late years had been more numerous than ever, whilst the wolves were becoming rarer. The peasants affirm that this is an inevitable law, that the wolf and the wild boar always increase or diminish inversely. Why this is so I have not yet been able to ascertain, for these animals do not make war upon each other; but there may be a mutual jealousy or dislike. However, although the wolves may be rarer in this forest than they have been in former years, there are still quite enough of them to occupy the attention of the shepherds on its outskirts. About the middle of December I happened to witness an incident which is not very rare. A few sheep were grazing quietly in a little sloping pasture along the wood's edge, when an animal first crept out cautiously and then rushed at the nearest sheep. That animal was a wolf, and his immense strength was proved by his manner of dealing with his victim. He got his head under the sheep's belly and threw her weight upon his own neck, her four feet beating the air. Holding her quite firmly in this position with his teeth, the wolf had strength enough to gallop very rapidly up the steep slope back to the impenetrable density of the copsewood, where it was of no use trying to follow him. Now the wolf in this country is not a very large animal, and a feat like this implies a degree of muscular and constitutional power which is relatively enormous. I could not help admiring the courage of the little shepherdess whose flock had been thus suddenly invaded. She was very much irritated at the impudence of the wolf, but not alarmed by his ferocity, and she threw her wooden shoe after him as an expression of most earnest though inefficacious hostility, uttering at the same time sentiments of her own in *patois* of extraordinary volubility, which were certainly not benedictions. The girl's father told me afterwards that on one occasion she had actually beaten a wolf till he retreated, and there are so many anecdotes of a similar character that I infer a certain human influence over these animals, which as they are of canine race may have something of canine deference for humanity.

The wild boar has one indisputable advantage over the wolf—he is eatable. There is always wild boar in some form or other during the winter months in the larder at the Val Ste. Véronique. It was a fancy of mine that our guns ought to supply a great part of our food, and they did so during what remained of the season.

The month of January opened splendidly, with sunshine in the grey and gold of the forest. I think that the sadness so often attributed to winter scenery is due much more to the prevalence of cloud and fog, and to the chilly, uncomfortable temperature, than to the state of vegetation. The colour of winter scenery is not without elements of variety and even brilliance. The leaves of the preceding year are important, both for the richness of the tints they give, and, when seen close at hand, for the fixed beauty of their forms. A leaf that has passed the autumn on the tree, and dried there, is always sure to be well worth drawing, for the force and variety of its curvature. Even in January oak-leafage is rich upon the trees, and though its colour is often too red and coppery to be altogether agreeable to the eye, still it breaks the monotony of the grey stems. Saplings retain their leaves longest, and there are varieties of oak which have a pale yellowish-brown that a painter might accept with pleasure. The common hornbeam also preserves its leaves far into the following year, and the underwood of this forest is full of it. Hardly a single leaf of hornbeam is missing in the month of January, but every one of them is curled up with a graceful twist, showing the lines of ribs under it quite distinctly, even at a distance of several yards. There is no material better than dried oak and hornbeam for the study of natural curvature, because you can carry a sprig home with you, and it will retain all its forms, day after day, as if the leaves were made of metallic gold. The hornbeam underwood is splendid in the slanting sunshine of a January afternoon. The beech, too, is important for its winter foliage; which remains, almost all of it, in situations sheltered from the winds. The colour is a beautiful light red brown, and the form of the leaf very perfect indeed, with a good surface. The roads in the forest about the Val Ste. Véronique are often bordered on both sides with trunks of beech, and the effect in January is rich in the extreme, on account of the splendid freshness of the green mosses, which are in perfection and give the best possible contrast to the beech-leaves.

No tree in January is so variously rich in colour as the quince-tree. The branches (so wonderfully tortuous and interlaced) are tinted of a summer-like green—painted, I may say, by nature with the tiniest of her green mosses; whereas the leaves, of which very many are still remarkably perfect in form, are of a rich red brown, and the under side isof a pale golden brown, with a little down remaining. The most decayed leaves are a good deal darker. Now, although the oak, beech, or hornbeam, still retain their leaves in the following year, they offer but little variety of hue; and though a sprig of oak might instruct and occupy a designer, the quince-tree would occupy a colourist. So, indeed, would the common bramble, with its crimson or purple stalk and leaves, often still retaining a perfectly fresh green, others being of a dark, ochrous red, but still very perfect in their form.

P. G. HAMERTON.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XVIII.—M. W. RIDLEY.

The Orange Wharf, London Bridge.

THE development of modern etching which has taken place during the last few years is not altogether quite so encouraging as I had hoped. In some respects it is no doubt very encouraging. There are now about a dozen excellent professional etchers who can do what they like with both point and acid; but then these professional men usually give their time to the reproduction of other men's work, and are, in fact, engravers in a kind of engraving certainly more artistic than the old burin-engraving, and yet scarcely employed for a more original or personal purpose. The 'Gazette des Beaux Arts' has a staff of quite admirable etchers from pictures, who interpret other men's work with the greatest spirit and intelligence, yet do not so often use the point for the publication of their own designs and inventions. The plain truth is, that etching is an art of the very greatest technical difficulty, and that the contest with this difficulty is of itself quite enough to absorb the whole energy of a laborious artist for many years, so that he may feel it a relief to have artistic compositions made ready to his hand by the invention of another mind. Hence it is coming to pass, that the very same difficulty which made engravers copyists is now tending to make etchers copyists also; and this, not because the etchers or engravers are mechanics destitute of artistic feeling and invention, but on account of the great difficulty of working upon metal which makes such calls upon energy and perseverance that it occupies, or tends to occupy, all the energies of the man.

And yet, on the other hand, whilst cordially appreciating the substantial qualities of such etching as is now done by Flameng, Rajon, Le Rat, and others of the same accomplished school, one may still desire to preserve that distinct art which is known as *painters' etching;* in which the painter, leaving for awhile his palette and his easel, takes a varnished plate, and notes down upon it some impression, not always scientifically, it may be, yet with a degree of sincerity and freshness which are often a compensation for science. There is a charm in all true etchings of this class which is generally wanting in the complete and scientific tone-etching of men who have given themselves a long and special training in the art. But as a general rule (notwithstanding the exceptional success of Mr. Watson in a first attempt of this kind), it is certainly better for painters who etch to confine themselves simply to the line, with some indication of shade here and there where it pleases them to put it, rather than to attempt the full gamut of tone, which involves the most skilful and complicated biting. Notwithstanding all the improvements in modern processes, the art is still so difficult, that a painter who does not work at it almost without ceasing is pretty certain to fall short either in correctness of tone and drawing on the one hand, or else in the loss of freshness and character on the other. Mr. Ridley, in the present instance, has evidently preferred some sacrifice of accuracy in drawing to the loss of simplicity and directness in the work, but this inaccuracy is not really due either to want of knowledge or want of care. On the other hand, the plate has the great merit of entirely expressing the local character which is the real subject of it—a very curious local character, highly entertaining to any observant person. Whistler's etchings are full of character of this kind, and we may presume that Mr. Ridley has, in some degree, worked under Mr. Whistler's influence.

Mr. Ridley was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in the year 1837. He came afterwards to London, and was for about three years a pupil of Mr. Smirke, the architect and Academician. Not finding architectural work much to his taste, Mr. Ridley became a pupil of Mr. Dobson, the well-known painter, and entered the schools of the Academy. He afterwards studied art in Paris, and since his return to England has been a frequent exhibitor at the Academy. There is a remarkable picture by him in the present exhibition—a portrait of an old sea-captain—favourably mentioned in the first Academy article in the *Times.* He has etched very few plates, but those which he has etched have been marked by great sincerity and simplicity of purpose, and have chiefly represented the picturesque craft to be found in our docks and larger rivers. I feel sure, that if Mr. Ridley chose to practise etching regularly he would confirm the favourable opinion expressed some years ago in 'Etching and Etchers.'

P. G. Hamerton.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS (1723-1792) *continued.*

IT would be idle to introduce, in such a place as this, anything like a systematic sketch of the life of Reynolds. In turning-points and great events his life is wanting. In the particulars of every day it has a delightful interest: but these particulars are too well known, and have been too often repeated point by point, for any abstract of them to be needful or possible here. It is the one age in English social life which is in the best and innermost sense an age of memoirs. Memoirs and biographies, in most epochs of English life, have not been as they have always been in France, an admirable and attractive division of the national literature; they have either been lost in the dignity of history, or sunk in the dulness of gossiping commonplace, or disguised (like, alas, so many biographies of artists in the age next succeeding Reynolds, and some even in his own) with the affectations and reserves of a pedantic propriety. But the chief books of memoirs and biographies through which passes to and fro the bland and genial figure of Reynolds himself—these are the classics and masterpieces of their order, the books that everybody knows and that the just affection of posterity holds continually more endeared. Literary posterity, both great and small—from Thackeray to the commonest hack of the magazines—is never tired of reviving and lingering about the pictures brought before us by these bright familiar books. First and foremost, there is the sovereign Boswell; and there are Walpole's *Letters;* and there is Fanny Burney the ever shrewd and shy, with her touching gratitude for the Knight's consideration in sparing her the dreaded infliction of compliment, and sheltering her from the importunity of others who will not spare. These for the chief of writings actually contemporary, and bringing before us the movements of the master from day to day; and then, almost every other contemporary biography more or less; and then the special retrospective works—Malone's *Life*, Farington's *Life*, Beechey's *Life*, Northcote's *Life*, Allan Cunningham's sketch, Mr. Cotton's valuable monographs, and lastly the two solid and comprehensive volumes in which Mr. Tom Taylor, building immediately on foundations laid by Leslie, has brought together and commented the most appropriate matter out of all these and out of the history of the time.

It is a career in full daylight, so that any one who chooses may even know with whom the master dined on almost every day of every year, and watch him in his daily communications with the men and women who make up that prodigious and living gallery of his art. No obscure intervals, no unaccountable passages, no dark seasons or periods of withdrawal; no shunning of men; no wrestling, as it seems, with himself or his thoughts. He wakes up in the sweet village borough of South Devonshire—that country of steep valleys and green promontories between the moorland and the sea, with its rich soil and southern air, conspiring first, as we have said, to do its best for British Art, as, five years later, the Essex border with its winding meadows and pleasant flatness beneath a greyer sky was to conspire; there he wakes up; a little vexes the soul of the gentle helpless pedagogue, his father, with drawing perspective exercises 'out of pure idleness' instead of attending to his task; begins with taking the heads of his acquaintance, and feels the Raphael within him upon the perusal of Richardson's rousing treatise. At sixteen, it is decided that he shall be bound apprentice to Hudson, Richardson's son-in-law and successor in the profession of face-painting, who has belongings in the West country and is known there. Hudson's apprentice he is for a while; then back to Devonshire, where he forms himself upon the style of the local painter of Exeter. This Gandy is to him a better sort of that which Steele was presently to Romney. The young fellow pleases, and gets custom for his portraits, is well liked by the high families of his county; and at twenty-six, making the acquaintance of the gallant Keppel, his own junior by two years, at the house of Lord Mount Edgcumbe, gets the opportunity of sailing with him to join the Mediterranean squadron, and so for a three years' stay in Italy. Then, after his return and his establishment, at the age of thirty, as a portrait-painter in London, it is a path of roses such as, though a few others following the arts have walked at one time or another, scarce any equally with him have both walked and deserved to walk. The Mount Edgcumbe connection, the Keppel connection, bring him in sitters from the first; and almost from the first his difference from other painters is apparent. Almost from the first, too, he steps into relations of friendship and equal intercourse with those who came to him as great folks to any other painter; while on the other hand, he seeks and acquires the goodwill of the men of letters and learning. Johnson is one of the first of these; and Johnson and Reynolds for the rest of their lives (as indeed to lose a friend does not seem to have been in Reynolds's nature) are the friends that all the world knows. Then there is Garrick, and Goldsmith, and such further circles as these names imply, and presently Burke; and by this time everybody. Perhaps of all existences on record it is the most prodigiously social. Certainly so much sociality has hardly by any one else been found consistent with so much industry.

'Industry is genius, and genius industry;' that, or what comes to that, is the text of all Reynolds's Presidential Discourses to the students—those famous compositions from many points of view so admirable, although they need, to be read with profit, that one or two standing confusions of thought in them should be clearly realised for what they are. 'Industry is genius, and genius industry.' It may be an excellent principle to insist upon to students, as holding out to industry the highest and most flattering of all rewards, and as tending to save genius, where it really exists, from the rust of sloth; but it is not true, as many an industrious spirit knows to its humiliation. And yet one can conceive how to a man of Reynolds's temperament the principle might have seemed not only serviceable, but true as well. Genius, that disposition of the powers for intense and complete energy in one kind or another which we call by the name, works in many ways. One man shall have genius, and it shall wrestle in him, and drive him apart from his fellows into hostile or self-centred isolation ; or if his particular energy is of the kind that leads him perforce into the world, he shall be in the world but not of it. Another man shall have genius, and it shall work softly in him, so that he is scarcely aware, but may do what he has energy for in harmony with himself and, according to the tenor of his life, with his fellows. The genius of Reynolds was of the latter kind—a virtue that flowed from him smoothly and unawares, not one that surged within him and made tempest in his being. Knowing nothing of genius in the form in which it shakes a man, he might fail to believe in it. Knowing plenty of industry, having set industry always consciously before himself, and having always serenely plied, not only so many hours a day, but so many hours every day,—knowing plenty of that in its habitual exercise and what, in his case, was its fruit, he might believe in it and in it alone. He might ignore his genius because it gave him no trouble. And only, on the other hand, because his genius gave him no trouble could he combine such an immense industry (for it is this which we are coming to) with such an immense sociality. This he could not have done had the disposition of his powers been for any energy of the tempestuous kind ; not if they had been for any height of the imagination, any efforts at sublimity and grandeur, least of all if they had been for any movements of indignation or remonstrance. Consider Michelangelo, for a man whose genius wrestled within him and was a trouble. To say that is another way of saying how indignation vexed his spirit, how sublimity uphove it, how high among thunder-haunted crags dwelt his imagination. Yes, and how he lived apart, of all mortals the most lonely and stern, except for one interval of devotion to a woman, and that a thing, as it seems, more of worship than of communion, a sweetness more in thought than in life. Michelangelo lives for ever apart, Reynolds lives for ever in company. Each therein follows his nature, and the whole difference is told. Michelangelo cannot be a diner out, nor will a diner out ever make a Michelangelo : but Reynolds, having wrought his eight hours or his ten, has nothing to separate him from his kind; and will go to dinner, everywhere welcomed and respected, on Sunday with the society of Dilettanti, on Monday with the gravest of Bishops, on Tuesday with Kitty Fisher or Nancy Parsons or Nelly O'Brien, the lightest of light ladies, on Wednesday with Wilkes the demagogue, on Thursday with Dr. Johnson the upholder of Church and King, on Friday with the Blues, Mrs. Montague or Mrs. Vesey or Mrs. Cholmondeley, on Saturday with the Duke of Rutland ; and so on, but for summer visits to Devonshire and among the houses of his great friends, and an occasional run to Paris or Holland, almost every day through all those five-and-thirty fortunate years. Among dozens of hostile groups, Reynolds can find a place as well in one as in another. His profession, indeed, detaches him from party, and makes it consequent that his opinions should be neutral. But it is not his profession, it is not his opinions, which in fact go with his Whig friends, it is something in his temper apart from these, that makes him the welcome guest of every house, and the friend of those who hate each other ; passing just before the famous trial from the company of Warren Hastings into that of Burke, and from that of the Tory Dukes into that of Wilkes, of Beckford or the other Lord Mayors. Something in his temper, which has been variously defined, and sometimes to his discredit ; a coldness, a selfishness,—but cold or selfish hearts do not grapple to themselves, with hooks like those, friends like a Keppel, a Johnson, a Burke ; an obsequiousness—but the obsequious man is despised by those who entertain him, and Sir Joshua is despised by no man ; nay, even that spurious contempt which envy loves to feign has, in the case of his enviers, to fasten upon the art and its subjects and scope much more than upon the man and his character. Say rather a heart affectionate but serene (which is quite another thing from cold) ; a will resolutely bent upon its own ambition, the ambition of excellence (which, as it grudges no excellence in other people, has nothing to do with selfishness) ; above all, a mind which, though it may and does hold convictions, is occupied much less with its convictions than with curiosity. I meant not any ignoble curiosity ; but the just and natural impulse of conversing with, watching, understanding, and learning from the most of various kinds of men. There is nothing like natural affectionateness, coupled with that kind of curiosity, to breed the fine tact and tolerant courtesy which are the great social attainments of Reynolds. Another man who is an observer—say Johnson—must judge strongly for or against what he observes, and is violent; Reynolds is not carried so quickly towards judgment, or at any rate does not need to be out with his judgment except in season, and observes with sweetness. He is the 'gentle, complying, and bland' of Goldsmith's famous verses. And what temper so proper, if you are a painter of portraits, to bring you sitters, and when they are brought, to ensure that you shall see and paint them for what inwardly no less than outwardly they are?

Accordingly, in Reynolds the industry and the sociability help and do not hinder each other. His is a harmonious spirit, born for its task. With great or compulsive thoughts of his own he is not tried; but likes to supply himself with thoughts by conversation with the thinkers and men of letters of his day. He has sat and will continue to sit at the feet of Johnson, as of the man who had taught him to think. His dinners with literary friends at one Club or another are his occasions for elevating and enlarging his mind. He advises young artists to cultivate similar acquaintances and put themselves in the way of like opportunities. Let them read in order to become 'imbued with poetical ideas,' and let them fill the gaps, which the toil of their profession must needs leave in their reading, by the conversation of ingenious and learned men. And here we are again in collision with Reynolds's mechanical conception of what genius is. As on the side of execution he cannot in his mind distinguish genius from industry, so on the side of conception he cannot distinguish it from culture and an enlarged mind. He does not know of the poetical ideas that come to a man by nature, or of the temperament which causes all the ideas of a man to be poetical; he only knows of the poetical ideas which a man acquires or 'imbues himself with' by cultivation. The artist who to extended reading and conversation unites the habit of industry—that artist for him has everything. And now we can understand the way in which he talks of 'enthusiasm' and the imagination. These, according to Reynolds, are matters to follow after cultivation and industry, not as, according to fact, matters to go before them. He talks of enthusiasm as a state of mind to be voluntarily entered upon; even as an 'indulgence' to be 'recommended.' He says that the artist, 'having well established his judgment, and stored his memory, may now without fear *try the power of his imagination.* The mind that has been thus disciplined *may be indulged in the warmest enthusiasm*, and venture to play on the borders of the wildest extravagance.' He extends the principle into historic criticism, and avers of Phidias that he 'wrought upon a sober principle what has so much excited the enthusiasm of the world.' All that, of course, is to magnify the fact that discipline and sobriety are needed for the highest forms of art, at the expense of the fact that passionate strength of emotion is needed too, with a natural disposition of the powers for intense and concentrated energy; until your half-truth assumes the proportion of a falsehood, and even of a grotesque one.

But the half-truth which looks to us so grotesque was the ruling doctrine of the century all over Europe. To disbelieve in native endowment and believe in rules, to discountenance inspiration and enshrine 'taste'—it is an old story how that was the way of the eighteenth century until its closing years, when the modern spirit in Germany and England began to put forward its feet, and solve the question in walking. Since it was upon a sincere examination of itself, at least, although a mistaken one of past ages, that the eighteenth century thus formulated the nature and methods of genius and the imagination, it is not to be wondered at if the artists of the time, who attempt the highest forms of art on principle, fail as we have seen and have yet to see. It was inevitable that those disciples to whom Reynolds, the diner out, gave for their one watchword the name of Michelangelo the recluse, and to whom he recommended enthusiasm according to measure, should turn out very much unlike the model quoted to them. And indeed what there was of enthusiastic, of impassioned, of grandiose, in the England of that age, existed far less in the form of imagination than of action. That is a point to think on. The best imagination of the day is sober, sweet, demure, tender,—it is the *Deserted Village* or the *Vicar of Wakefield.* But what a mettle and passion, what a high air and heroism, in the action of the day—in much of its politics, conduct, and warfare. How far more poetical and grandiose the career and bearing of Chatham, how far more fiery the spirit of Burke, how much grander and more moving the lives and exploits of a Keppel, a Rodney, a Gilbert Elliot (those chosen subjects of Sir Joshua's pencil), the adventures of an Anson and a Cook—how much more full of fire and enthusiasm all these than anything with which the literary imagination of the day is conversant. In literature, in imagination, the sober, regulated, and rational; but in action the grandiose and spirit-stirring, heroism, gallantry, and endurance. In eloquence sublimity, in council vehemence, in all life strength, energy, colour, and character. Is it not then fortunate that the conditions combined, and first produced the artist, and then encouraged him, who might indeed inculcate imaginative art and preach Michelangelo, but who should *do* portrait art and *be* Sir Joshua? Is it not lucky that the age threw up its man?

Yes, and it is by thinking of the matter so that we may gauge the value of this phase of art in comparison with those other phases of which we spake last time. The strength of the age went out in action and not in imagination. We want to see and know the men strong in action. We *can* see them, thanks to Reynolds and his fellows—but for the wing of Time that has brushed too rudely the tender tracings, and his breath that has obscured them—we can see them perfectly as they were. Is it as desirable and precious a thing to see, to see and know perfectly, the lineaments of men strong in action, as to study the thoughts and imaginations of men strong in that? The relative estimate of the English beside the other arts lies in the answer; and the question is one which every man must answer for himself. When art can show you both together, in portrait art the lineaments of heroes and in inventive art the imaginations of poets, then no doubt you are best off; but when she can show you either in perfection, then be sure you are well off.

But we have spoken only of the men strong in action; how about the women high in purity and gentleness, and the children sweet with innocence and nature, which we set out by calling the more important? Theirs too is a kind of excellence in action, or in life. For even your learned Mrs. Montague, and your dear and brilliant Mrs. Thrale, and your shrewd and kind Fanny Burney, with her novels and her knowledge of human nature,—even these, and all the pleasant company of Blues, wits, and lady writers—half vain, and half ashamed of themselves—how much less interesting are they by what they think and write than by what they feel, are, and look; how much greater, in other words, is their genius in the practical than in the literary sphere. For to be thus sweet, and graceful beneath their beauty, to move with these gestures of innocence and radiant countenances of tenderness and candour, and to rear and love the glorious groups of children that they do, and to array themselves in garments so simple in quaintness, so pretty even beneath caprice and excess—all this I call practical. I call it genius. And there have been gallant captains and fiery statesmen before, and in ages and countries where the outside demeanour of men went for more, and their dress was more dignified and beautiful, than in our own. But such women and children as these there have never been, or art has never shown them. Look at this Cornelia: she of Rome never looked so sweet; never (we are prepared to stand by it) had her Caius and Tiberius twined so beautifully about her. Nobleness of family life, nobleness and tenderness with purity, and with the enchantment of a sweet and familiar playfulness,—that is the Roman virtue, illuminated with a grace not Roman, which this art enthrones. That is the ideal of this age, and an ideal which had its root in realities. The opposite realities of the age, the vice, the restlessness, the Kitty Fishers and Nelly O'Briens, the Mrs. Baddeleys and other frailties whose society virtue was compelled at the sword's point to accept, the licence, scandal, and excess—all those only serve to show the strength of what we praise. For it is not, as in France at the same hour, the scandalous and licentious that set the fashion to the pure and innocent; it is purity and innocence which set the fashion to scandal and licence; so that in Reynolds's art the demirep looks maidenly and the wanton demure.

Sidney Colvin.

FLAMENG'S COPY OF THE HUNDRED-GUILDER PRINT.

THE illustrations etched by M. Flameng for M. Charles Blanc's catalogue of the works of Rembrandt have long been familiar to every student of the art, and we have known for years that M. Flameng could copy Rembrandt with a degree of life and truth which left little to be desired. Still it is probable that the *élite* of the European art-public will not be quite prepared for the great technical triumph which M. Flameng has just achieved. He has produced a copy of one of Rembrandt's most difficult and complicated etchings—a copy which, if we balance one quality against another, certainly far exceeds the most perfect photograph in accuracy, whilst at the same time it possesses as a piece of execution in etching all those technical merits for which Rembrandt himself was famous. In fact, this performance entirely confirms what I said of Flameng several years ago, that he can overcome any technical difficulty which Rembrandt himself could overcome; and it is not an exaggeration of the truth to affirm, that there exists in Europe in our own day a man who may be said to possess the hand and eye of Rembrandt, though not that force of imagination which was the source and motive of his energy.

It may be difficult to convey to the atechnic reader that full apprehension of the wonder of such work as this, which will seize upon every etcher when he examines it. In a certain sense, and for some peculiar reasons which will be given in support of the assertion, it may be boldly affirmed that, as a technical performance merely, such a copy as this is even more wonderful than the original plate itself. There is a freedom from restraint in all original artistic labour which is not compatible with the duties of the copyist, and yet at the same time the copyist has to play his part so perfectly as to seem not less free in thought and hand than the original artist whom he is imitating. Rembrandt may get a shade, in the biting, paler or darker than he intended it, but who can point out where his idea was imperfectly realised?—or even in the drawing of a form a line may fail to correspond quite accurately to his thought, and yet no critic who ever lived discovered the secret of that failure. The freedom of original art is due to the impossibility of comparing the work of the artist with that which it professes to represent; but the copyist knows that the very first thing any one will do when he has the opportunity, will be to put his copy side by side with the original and test it by two comparisons—one for the general effect and the other for every detail. Hence, in selecting a work to be copied, we must remember that the more ease and freedom there is in the original performance the greater will be the difficulty of imitating it, and so true is this that painters cannot copy their own sketches. It is easier to write a thing for the first time freely in our own handwriting than to copy our handwriting in facsimile. A child could make a labyrinth of scrawls in a quarter of an hour which the most skilful draughtsman could not reproduce without great care and labour, and a considerable expenditure of time.

Now it so happens that this Hundred-Guilder Print offers every conceivable difficulty to the copyist. It is a piece of work in which great freedom of manner is united to an extraordinary delicacy, both of line and tone, and no copy can be successful which does not render all those delicate lines and tones with complete fidelity, whilst preserving to the full at least the appearance of that freedom which Rembrandt really enjoyed, but which in the copyist is nothing but the most consummate acting. It is in a certain sense more difficult to copy an etching in etching than to engrave a picture which the engraver may interpret as he chooses. Here there is no choice, whatever the master did the copyist must do after him.

The process, too, offers the peculiar difficulty that the artist does not see his work during its progress, except at occasional intervals, when the etching-ground is removed from the plate, and a proof taken between one state and another. Then he has to draw every line in reverse; and though he is aided by tracing-paper and the mirror, this is still a very serious inconvenience.

And for the intensity of his shades he is dependent upon an auxiliary, which is proverbially difficult to manage, and capable of unexpected treacheries—the acid.

There are passages in a work like this which put to the severest test the capabilities of the executant, because if you cannot conquer them at the first stroke you cannot conquer them at all. There are faces which do not contain more than a dozen lines, and upon the exactness with which these are placed depends the whole expression of the countenance. Let the hand tremble never so little, and its uncertainty will be at once transferred to the copper in the weakness of a false and ill-regulated line. Although Rembrandt was prodigal of lines in transparent shades and half-tones, he was most economical of them when it pleased him to *dessiner au trait,* and the copyist has no choice but to use a like economy. Now when the expression of a face, perhaps the face of the most important personage in the composition, is entirely dependent upon the correct and skilful drawing of one stroke, which in many such cases *cannot* be done slowly, and cannot be done twice without effacing it entirely from the copper, the reader will at once perceive the degree of sureness of hand and eye which is necessary for a feat of this kind, and he will appreciate the difficulty of a performance in which such feats must be attempted over and over again.

M. Flameng has been prepared for his task by a training much more complete than that which etchers have usually received. Men who loved and practised the genuine art of etching have hitherto generally been painters who could not give time enough to the copper to vanquish all its difficulties, and were therefore obliged to content themselves with work which, although it may have been roughly expressive of their ideas, was often, from the technical point of view, rude and imperfect in execution. Many amateurs have also attempted etching, and one or two of them have succeeded in producing the kind of work which a painter is most likely to achieve; but neither painter nor amateur can attain the technical power necessary to cope with Rembrandt, unless he gives the time which Rembrandt gave. M. Flameng has had a thorough engraver's education, and is indeed at this moment one of the best burin-engravers in Europe; and, besides this, he has from childhood been a passionate admirer of the great artist-etchers, whose spirit is his own spirit, whose antipathies and preferences are his own preferences and antipathies. Having studied Rembrandt all his life, and copied him not a little, he came to this plate prepared for his great task by the thoughts and labours of many previous years, and sustained and encouraged, more than would have been possible to any one a little time since, by that extension of a serious interest in etching which is one of the most striking evidences of the increase of artistic culture in Europe. It is something for a great engraver to feel and know, when he engages in such an enterprise as this, that in every capital in the civilised world there are at least a few intelligent and cultivated persons by whom he will be gratefully and immediately appreciated. This is not the sort of work which the vulgar have ever cared for, and they may be left to their showy prints; but it fortunately happens that the cultivated public is now just numerous enough to encourage any serious artist who has the taste and skill to satisfy it.

The value of a copy, in a case of this kind, is greater than might be supposed. A fine impression from a fine copy is nearer to the thought of Rembrandt than an impression taken directly from one of his own coppers when they had been worn by too much printing. A fine impression from a plate etched by a copyist who *can* etch, is far nearer in quality to the original work than any photographic reproduction ever can be; and beside this, copperplate printing is much more regular and reliable than photographic printing, so that the satisfactory proofs in an edition are likely to be far more numerous. The photographic engraving on metal, for which several different patents have been taken in England and on the Continent, overcomes this last objection; but in those processes so much has to be done by biting and correction that the risks of failure are considerable. A good copy, by an artist who is technically equal to the master he has to render, and who is in perfect sympathy with him, and reproduces him as a labour of love, is still, notwithstanding all modern discoveries and inventions, the next best thing to a fine early impression from the original plate itself. Were it not that the self-sacrifice required would be almost superhuman, and the task so fatiguing as to deaden those very sensibilities which are essential to its successful achievement, one would be tempted to desire that M. Flameng should re-engrave the entire *œuvre* of Rembrandt. It is his present intention to etch on a large scale one of Rembrandt's most important pictures—a task in some respects less onerous and more interesting than this has been, since the etcher will be left free to interpret according to his personal taste and feeling.

Few plates of Rembrandt illustrate so completely as this one the various and very different qualities which in their union have given him his supreme rank as an aquafortist. The finish of the shading, true and right finish—very far indeed from 'niggling'—is as remarkable on the one hand as are the sureness and selection of line on the other. The chiaroscuro is arbitrary, of course; Rembrandt's chiaroscuro usually *was* arbitrary, and it would be easy to point out impossible lights and shadows. But, whatever Rembrandt had a mind to do, that he did in the most efficient and masterly manner. If he wanted a shade to be liquid and transparent, it became merely so much partial darkness, and you see through it just what you ought to see and no more. If he intended a form to be well defined, it will be clearly visible at the right distance, though the means used be of the slightest. If he wanted a light to sparkle, it became luminous like a jewel. But enough of these technical considerations. The technical craft is useful—it is even indispensable; but its best employment is to lead us beyond itself to some thought that may lift up our hearts. There is one pale, plain, grave face in the centre of the composition, surrounded by a nimbus of dim glory, which is more affecting in this earnest northern art than in the stately design of Raphael.

EDITOR.

DAVID COX.*

THE author of the present book has undertaken a task which from its very nature is one of considerable difficulty. To write in an imposing form a memoir of a great artist who lived an almost ideal artist's life—that is to say, one in which his art was everything and events nothing—is an undertaking of which the dangers are obvious. A mere monograph, which might be made to contain all the instructive facts of the original's life, would appear an insufficient tribute to a deservedly great fame. Nevertheless, the number and variety of incidents which could be placed before the reader bearing necessarily an inverse ratio to the absorption of the artist in his work, the dilemma in such cases must consist in a choice between a copious and rather indiscriminate use of material on the one hand, and on the other a demand upon the reading public for an instinctive recognition of the conditions of an imaginative life, to which it might without cynicism be supposed to be unequal. Possibly the present writer has been delivered from both horns by the salutary influence of a hero-worship, which has raised the most trifling occurrences in connexion with his subject to the dignity of events. At any rate the main object has been satisfactorily attained, and I have closed the book, and believe that every intelligent reader will do so, with a vivid impression of a simple and genial life, full of productive work; not full of toil, for to him production was existence itself, the very end and essence of being: a life in which events were utterly absorbed in art, in connexion with which alone they have their meaning. So the writer may be said to have succeeded in his principal aim, and if he has failed to prove himself an apt disciple of a leading principle of his original, of which I shall speak further—that namely of putting aside all that is unnecessary to the main idea—his compensation must be that he will have won the suffrages, whatever they are worth, of those who will estimate an artist more or less according as he be made the subject of a quarto or of an octavo volume.

The book contains a number of autotype, heliotype, and photographic reproductions of sketches and water-colour drawings, and of one or two letters. The copies of the drawings, notwithstanding that colour, the most important element of effect, is wanting, convey a very vivid impression of the imaginative power of the artist, and would be sufficient to establish his pre-eminence even with those to whom the pure and subtle effects of the original drawings were entirely unknown. It is indeed no small tribute to the artist's powers of drawing and composition, that his work can without greater detriment be subjected to such an ordeal as this.

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* Memoir of the Life of David Cox, Member of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, with Selections from his Correspondence and some Account of his Works. By N. Neal Solly. London: Chapman and Hall. 1873.

David Cox was born in a suburb of Birmingham in the year 1783. His father was a blacksmith; his mother, the daughter of a farmer, and her husband's superior in power and in education. When about six or seven years old David Cox met with an accident, and while confined to his bed amused himself with a box of colours given to him by a friend. A little later his father attempted to make use of him in the pursuit of his trade, but without success, and in consideration of his love for colours he was sent to a drawing-school. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to a locket and miniature-painter in Birmingham, and he seems to have attained considerable proficiency in this art. His apprenticeship was, however, terminated prematurely by the suicide of his master. Shortly after he was initiated into the art of scene-painting under the auspices of de Maria, a well-known scene-painter, and having an opportunity of supplying a sudden emergency he recommended himself to Macready, father of the celebrated tragedian, whose company he joined, and was for some years an itinerant scene-painter, taking an occasional turn on the stage. His engagement with Macready was terminated by a difference between them, and Cox shortly afterwards left Birmingham for London. His mother established him in a family consisting of a mother and two daughters of the name of Ragg, the elder of whom he subsequently married. Thus by the age of twenty his occupation was finally determined, and he had already been initiated in the diametrically opposite branches of miniature and scene-painting, having also acquired some experience in open-air sketching.

Thenceforward the history of his life is one of constant occupation and very gradually increasing appreciation, the incidents being interesting only so far as they bear upon the development of his art. After living some years in London, and laboriously earning his bread by teaching and by the sale of drawings at very low prices, he removed with his family to Hereford, where his knowledge of, and feeling for, the various aspects of country life was greatly intensified. Herefordshire scenery, however, much as it taught him, had to yield the palm in his estimation to that of North Wales, for which his devotion continued paramount to the end of his life, and with which his works will always be specially associated. His taste always led him to prefer English to Continental scenery, and with the exception of the spacious sands of Calais and Boulogne, which had a great attraction for him, nothing ever tempted him from his native landscape, which he understood and loved better than any other.

After a second attempt to reconcile himself to life in London, Cox finally established himself at Greenfield House, Harborne, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, where he resided until his death. A yearly excursion to London, and to some picturesque part of the country—generally either Bettws-y-coed, or Rowsley in Derbyshire; the society of a few chosen friends, selected on the ground of sympathy in his art; the constant companionship of his wife, who appears to have been a constant help and support to him; these, together with a most prolific production of work, of which the standard seems to have steadily risen until, very shortly before his death at an advanced age, his eyesight became deteriorated, form the whole history of his life. Those to whom further details are of interest cannot do better than consult Mr. Solly's book. To me the great points of interest are the utter absence of all interest apart from the pursuit of his art, and the absolute and exclusive devotion which he evinced to it. On this ground even the letters on trivial subjects, which the writer has, at first sight rather unnecessarily, published, have a kind of interest, showing as they do how little attention the writer gave to any mode of expression other than that which was his own.

The life of David Cox being therefore almost exclusively contained in the history of the progress of his art-development, I shall confine myself to speaking of the leading features of his work generally, and of the characteristics of its development. In a work which he published in 1814, at a comparatively early period of his art, entitled 'A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect in Water-Colours,' the artist shows that he had already apprehended the great principle of abstraction: 'The principal art of Landscape Painting consists in conveying to the mind the most forcible effect which can be produced from the various classes of scenery which possess the power of exciting an interest superior to that resulting from any other effects, and which can only be obtained by a most judicious selection of particular tints and a skilful arrangement and application of them to difference in time, seasons, and situations.' Again: 'In the selection of a subject from nature the student should ever keep in view the principal object which induced him to make the sketch, whether it be mountains, a castle, group of trees, a cornfield, river scene, or any other object. The prominence of this leading feature in the piece should be duly supported throughout; the character of the picture should be derived from it; every other object introduced should be subservient to it, and the attraction of the one should be the attraction of the whole. . . . . All objects which are not in character with the scenes should be most carefully avoided, as the introduction of any unnecessary object is sure to be attended by injurious consequences;' and much more in the same direction, often, as the maxims became more concrete, rising little above the level of receipts for the concoction of drawings, such as 'a cottage or a village scene requires a soft and simple admixture of tones calculated to produce pleasure without astonishment,' while 'the structures of greatness and antiquity should be marked by a character of awful sublimity;' 'abrupt and irregular lines are productive of a grand and stormy effect, while serenity is the result of even and horizontal lines,' &c. &c.: but all hinting at the one great idea which underlies success in all art. That an almost unrivalled master of this great principle should have expressed it so inadequately in words is a matter of little surprise; the only wonder is that he should have thought it worth while to attempt to explain at all in words ideas too subtle for verbal expression; and, indeed, it is the drawing-master rather than the artist who speaks. But even supposing the idea to be adequately conveyed, it would as little help to mould a poetical artist of Cox's calibre as the laws of tragedy would to make an Æschylus. For example: granting all conviction of the truth of the principle that 'everything not in character with the scene is to be rejected,' whence is the idea of the 'character of the scene' to be derived? What is it but innate perception of something higher and more perfect than the utmost beauty which can be revealed through the senses; the possession in the soul of a standard to which the greatest concrete beauty can only in part conform; a creation of the ideal by the aid of the real; the one mysterious, immortal, and immortalising faculty which man possesses? Those who wish to appreciate the heights to which this creative faculty can attain should study, if only in the photograph justly placed first in this volume, Cox's drawing of the *Welsh Funeral.* There he will at least see a complete realisation of all the success which maxims of art can teach or which criticism can appraise. If beyond and above all this he can succeed in getting a glimpse of a poetry before which appreciation becomes ecstasy, and criticism rhapsody, of a passion which eclipses the highest attainments of rule as the sun masters a taper's light; if by the aid of the truthful and masterly representation of a real scene he can with the artist's eye see a vision of deeper import in the bowed sorrow of the aged, and the silent awe of children clinging together in the first startled sense of the mystery of our being, in the mist on the everlasting mountain as it touches and changes and passes, in the impassive beauty of Nature, who neither veils her face nor pauses in her courses for any cry of human grief; a vision of Death and Love, of Time and of Eternity; if something of this is revealed to him, let him be thankful that he is a poet at least in appreciation, that he is endowed with the utmost share of the great creative faculty which any but a very few of us may dare to hope for.

Apart from changes in mere technical method, the history of David Cox's art-development is one of a constantly strengthening grasp of the poetical or ideal, with a constantly diminishing reliance upon definite representations of detail, and the magic of his touch is never more apparent to those who are capable of appreciating his work than in works done in extreme old age, and in the very teeth of the difficulties of failing touch and eyesight. Whether the extremely broad or blotty manner of his latest work is to be accounted for mainly by physical infirmity or by his finding himself better and better able to realise his idea without the aid of detail, certain it is that in no pictures of his does the poetry of his genius shine forth more transcendently than in those painted during the last three years of his life.

Some few incidents which follow will be of interest to most readers. His position towards his own work seems to have been that of modest confidence, which public opinion affected in no degree. He has often been heard to say, 'Ah, Mr. ——, it is a difficult business! After all the years I have been working I know very little!' Until quite the latter years of his life many of his pictures were returned to him unsold, and his joy at recovering an old friend which *he* at least could appreciate generally mastered any disappointment he might have felt at the want of appreciation shown by others. On one occasion an artist observed with pleasure that all the works exhibited by him in the Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours were marked as sold. The artist remarked this to the Keeper of the Gallery, who said: 'Oh, that is Mr. Cox's own doing. On looking round the other day (only one or two of his drawings had been sold), he appeared rather vexed, and said, "Go at once and put a ticket of 'Sold' on all my drawings. They shall not have another chance!"' In a letter to his son he says of his drawings, 'It strikes me the Committee think them too rough; they forget they are *the work of the mind*, which I consider very far above portraits of places.'

He had the satisfaction, though very late in life, of seeing his work thoroughly appreciated by a sufficiently large public. In the very last year of his life he won the highest praise from the apostle of Pre-Raphaelites, and the following is a charming compliment reported to him in a letter by a friend:—'But the best of all things which was said of you is what poor dear little —— said one day, that when once people began to buy old Cox's drawings they never bought any one else's!' Measured by a money standard his success may be said to have been only posthumous. The highest price he ever received for a picture was 100*l*., whereas last year a single piece sold for 3600 guineas. But it is doubtful whether the artist could have been in any degree the happier for the stupendous fortune which his work could have realised at present prices. His rapidity of production was most remarkable, due not only to the unfaltering decision of touch which resulted from mind and hand working in perfect harmony, but also from his power of painting by artificial light. Indeed he more than once remarks that his drawings made by lamplight possess a greater freshness than those made in daylight. Possibly Mr. Liebreich might find in David Cox a subject for another optico-artistic lecture.

When he felt sure that the illness upon him was his last, and that he was leaving his parlour for the last time, he looked round the walls, and in a low mournful tone of voice exclaimed:—'Good-bye, pictures; good-bye; I shall not see you any more!' And his farewell to his art was indeed his farewell to life, for surely never elsewhere was life so absolutely identified with art.

This is, indeed, the greatest praise that we need give to the Memoir—that, having read it, in spite of vain repetition and needless detail, we feel that we can love the artist almost as much as, it is to be hoped for our own sakes, we have always loved his work. A desirable practical result of the publication of his life would be that an exhibition of his works should be organised for the instruction of a generation which may be in danger of forgetting David Cox, and which needs few things so much as to remember him.

BASIL CHAMPNEYS.

'THE BALLAD.' ETCHING BY J. D. WATSON.

REALLY, etching is the most unaccountable of the fine arts. Sometimes an etcher of the greatest experience will find himself entirely baffled, and not get at all the sort of quality that he desires, whilst there are first plates, quite the very first attempts of their authors, which have all the look of the most practised mastery. This plate by Mr. Watson is a case in point. One day he took a copper, varnished it according to directions received from some brother-artist, but not under his superintendence, sat down before a living model in his own studio, worked away direct from nature, without any preliminary study, and then, when he thought he had done enough, went and bit the plate by the light of nature, or νοῦς, and finished the whole at a sitting, just as we now present it to our readers. Now the simple truth is that this plate is full of fine quality: it has fine quality of light-handed free line-drawing, and still finer and rarer quality of variously-tinted shade. In a word, the treatment is charmingly artistic, and quite in the true etcher's manner and temper; for etching ought to be the facile accomplished expression of the results of study, and not a painful study in itself.

Mr. Watson is modest enough to believe that 'any merit the plate has as an etching is due to sheer good luck.' Not altogether so; or, at least, it is a sort of luck which happens only to good artists. Sometimes, it is true, an artist etches a good plate by a sort of happy chance, but in these cases there has always been great artistic accomplishment and experience in some other kindred art to prepare the hand for its novel feat of skill; the luck, in this instance, was in the biting, but there was no luck at all in the drawing, or in the conception of light and shade. It seems very desirable that Mr. Watson should practise etching sufficiently to make himself sure of *always* doing good work. The art is now so much better appreciated than it used to be, and by so much larger a public, that it is better worth while to etch than it was ten years ago. Let me suggest to Mr. Watson, and to other painters, that it is a capital plan for a painter who can etch to keep in this way a record of each of his pictures as it leaves his easel. The etching may be done in little intervals of time whilst the picture is in progress, and a collection of such plates would afterwards form the best possible catalogue of the artist's labours. Several painters are doing this already, and others are regretting that they have not done it.

EDITOR.

CONSTABLE.

THE 'Life of Constable,' by Mr. Leslie, was rather a collection of well-arranged material than a true biography. Leslie's desire was to make Constable the narrator of his own story by means of his private letters; but the difficulty for the reader is that this material, though carefully put in order for his convenience, is still in the raw state, so that he has the trouble of extracting the essence of it for himself, which is not very easy on a first perusal, nor even on a second reading, unless with the help of notes. The recent acquisition of two pictures by Constable for the Louvre, and the increasing importance of his name in the history of landscape art, have induced me to attempt a short biography of him, with Leslie's material for a basis.

John Constable was born in the summer of 1776, at East Bergholt, a pleasant village in the most cultivated part of Suffolk, 'situated,' as Constable himself describes it, 'on a spot which overlooks the fertile valley of the Stour, which river separates that county, on the south, from Essex. The beauty of the surrounding scenery, its gentle declivities, its luxuriant meadow flats, sprinkled with flocks and herds, its well-cultivated uplands, its woods and rivers, with numerous scattered villages and churches, farms, and picturesque cottages, all impart to this particular spot an amenity and elegance hardly anywhere else to be found.' In the whole history of art there does not exist a single instance of a landscape painter who loved his native scenery with a passion at once so intense and so exclusive; and whether it was the scenery that made the artist, or the artist who lent to the land of his birth that poetical consecration which is the fountain of all that is most charming in pictorial creation, it is certain that there existed such a harmony between the place and the man, that the two belonged to each other, and are henceforth inseparable in our memory. That expression of Constable's, 'An amenity and elegance *hardly anywhere else to be found*,' contains the utterance of a life-long passion. He found in his Suffolk scenery that which for him was not discoverable elsewhere, the grace and charm of the native land. His distinction above other natives of East Bergholt was to have perceived the capabilities of the trees, and fields, and mills, and streams about his birthplace, as material with which a painter might remain permanently satisfied, and build the edifice of an enduring reputation.

The early teaching which Constable received was determined for him inevitably by the position of his family in the well-to-do rural middle class. He was taught Latin in the grammar-school kept by Dr. Grimwood at Dedham, and this master saw the signs of genius in his pupil, although the youth attained proficiency in nothing but penmanship. After this he took some lessons in French, but without advancing far. In short, his literary education was so limited that it only occupied a corner of his mind, and left plenty of space for painting, which, at the age of seventeen, had already fixed itself there, never afterwards to be dislodged. At this time of life Constable's most intimate friend was John Dunthorne, a plumber and glazier, who lived in a cottage close to the gate of his father's house. Dunthorne was an enthusiastic amateur of art, who gave all his leisure to the practice of landscape-painting from nature, and this similarity of tastes was the cause of a close alliance.

Mr. Golding Constable, the young artist's father, who had a fair property in land and mills, at first desired to have him educated for the Church, and then resolved to make a miller of him. Constable did not feel inclined to go through the studies necessary for the clerical life, though he was always an attached member of the Church of England, and there was an ecclesiastical element in his subsequent tastes and friendships. So he became a miller in his father's mills, and followed the business in a quite satisfactory way for twelve months. Leslie points out that this experience may have had an appreciable influence on his subsequent work as an artist, since the management of a windmill involves continual attention to the weather, and therefore to the state of the sky, which was afterwards of great importance in Constable's pictures. Yes, it is probable that this space of life passed in the windmill was a part of that general experience and education which formed the artist in Constable. Other influences soon afterwards began to operate. Sir George Beaumont's mother was living at Dedham, and Constable was introduced to her and her well-known son, a man who really loved art, though there was a strong element of conventionalism in his nature. It was at Dedham that Constable first beheld a picture by Claude (now in the National Gallery, with the title of *The Annunciation*) which Sir George often carried about with him when he travelled, and he ever after remembered the first sight of a landscape by so famous an artist as an important epoch in his life. Fortunately for Constable, Sir George also possessed about thirty water-colour drawings by Girtin, which the young artist diligently studied by his new friend's recommendation, 'as examples of great breadth and truth.' These early examples retained to the last their high place in Constable's veneration, for his life was a continuous development of early-received principles and impressions, unbroken by any violence of revolution.

In the year 1795 Mr. Golding Constable allowed his son to go to London, with a view of ascertaining 'what might be his chances of success as a painter.' He became acquainted with Farrington, a landscape painter, and John Thomas Smith, an engraver and antiquary, whom people called 'Antiquity Smith.' Both these men encouraged Constable to perseverance, and gave him valuable advice. Mr. Leslie quotes an excellent saying of 'Antiquity Smith,' which Constable ever afterwards remembered—a saying marked with sterling good sense, and that preference for *the suitable* which is one of the secrets of the profoundest harmony in art. 'Do not,' said Smith, 'set about inventing figures for a landscape taken from nature; for you cannot remain an hour in any spot, however solitary, without the appearance of some living thing that will in all probability accord better with the scene and time of day than will any invention of your own.'

After this Constable lived alternately in London and at Bergholt, giving up all his evenings to the study of anatomy. Still he was not yet finally and irrevocably devoted to art, for in 1797 he looks forward, not without regret, to a life of steady business work, which he appears to have resumed as an assistant to his father. It is only in 1799 that the decision is made by which he abandons business for ever, and enters as a student at the Royal Academy, where he made many chalk-drawings and oil-paintings from the living model. He seems to have taken to copying from the elder masters, which is excellent practice for a young artist when he has the patience for it. During Constable's early career he is always either copying something, or intending or wishing to do so. In 1800 he goes to Helmingham Park, and makes sketches there, and in 1801 he visits Derbyshire. In one of his letters from London about this time he speaks with intense affection of the scenery about his native place, saying that 'he even loves every stile and stump, and every lane in the village.' In 1802 he takes great interest in anatomy, attends lectures on the subject regularly, and makes many accurate and beautiful coloured anatomical drawings of a large size. He exhibited for the first time in the Academy of 1802.

Amongst the favourable influences of this period must be mentioned the encouragement and good advice given him by the President of the Academy, West. The effect on the career of an artist of a single sentence spoken to him in his youth by a man whom he reverences as an authority, may be such as to affect the whole course of it. Here is one of West's recommendations—'Always remember, sir, that light and shadow *never stand still*.' Constable never forgot this, and any one who knows his pictures will recognise the doctrine in his work. Besides this, West told his young friend to keep in mind the prevailing character of every object that he painted, rather than its accidental appearance—a piece of advice full of the most comprehensive wisdom, for it contains the whole principle of the artistic interpretation of nature.* These doctrines fell like seed on a good soil, and Constable had other obligations to Mr. West, but the chief of them was this. Dr. Fisher, an ecclesiastical friend of the artist, had found him the situation of drawing-master in a school, but West used all his influence to prevent Constable from accepting it, and answered Dr. Fisher himself. The elder artist well knew how impossible it would have been to combine the drudgery of perpetually teaching rudiments to boy-amateurs with the serious studies which are necessary to success in art. In a letter of Constable's, written in 1802, he says that for the two years preceding he has been running after pictures and seeking the truth at second-hand, and he adds, '*I shall return to Bergholt, where I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes that may employ me*.' In this sentence we have the one great resolution of his life, the resolution which he fulfilled by the entire devotion of his time and faculties through many laborious years. Notwithstanding his reverence for Claude, and other great artists of the past, Constable had little respect for the landscape art which appeared in the annual exhibitions. He thought that its pervading vice was '*bravura*, an attempt to do something beyond the truth,' and therefore he set to work from nature in a spirit which, though not rebellious against the traditions of the past, was entirely independent of contemporary practice. This is the characteristic in the very peculiar temper of Constable which is so easily misunderstood, and has been so unfairly misrepresented. He was much less rebellious against the tradition of the great masters than our own Pre-Raphaelites have been, but at the same time he was positively more isolated than any single member of that fraternity. His position was like that of an only child, who has ancestors but no brothers. Of this, however, I shall have more to say when his life has been fully told.

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* I mean as West intended it. He was not arguing against what the criticism of the last century called 'accidents,' and considered, as such, beneath the notice of serious art. He meant that an artist ought not to forget the prevailing qualities of things; and he gave as an example, that although the sky was sometimes solemn or lowering, we ought not to forget its prevailing quality of brightness. The best modern art has owed many of its most unquestionable successes to a kind of study in harmony with this precept of 'the venerable President.'

In 1803 he made a sea-voyage from London to Deal, and was about a month on board ship, occupying himself during nearly the whole time in making drawings of ships in all situations, and seeing all sorts of weather. During this excursion Constable visited the British fleet at Chatham, when he sketched the *Victory* in three views. The *Victory* had just been repaired. 'She was the flower of the flock,' he says. 'She looked very beautiful, fresh out of dock and newly painted. When I saw her they were bending the sails; which circumstance, added to a very fine evening, made a charming effect.' This was two years and a half before her rigging was shattered by the cannon of Trafalgar. The artists of that day were more fortunate than their successors of the present in the beauty of war-ships. We, who see things like the *Devastation* encumbering the ocean with their ugliness, may envy Constable his sight of that fleet which could delight the eyes of painters as it stirred the hearts of poets. These sketches of the *Victory* were used by Constable afterwards for an illustration of the great battle. On leaving the ship he sailed in the artist lost all his sketches, a hundred and thirty in number, but recovered them later. Of all losses, that of sketches is the most trying to artists: they bear even money losses with greater equanimity.

In 1806 Constable's maternal uncle recommended him to make a tour in Westmoreland and Cumberland, and paid his expenses. He spent about two months in the north, and made many sketches of a large size, with fine effects of light, and shade, and colour. Still, the scenery of the Lake District appears to have left little impression on his mind, and instead of wishing to have a residence there, as Dr. Arnold did, he never revisited those hills and lakes; nor did he afterwards care to go into any mountainous country, for he never saw the Highlands, nor Switzerland, nor Wales. What an absolute difference, in the need or taste for landscape, between the mind of Constable and the mind of Dr. Arnold! The landscape-painter said 'that the solitude of mountains oppressed his spirits;' and his biographer, Leslie, who so intimately knew his tastes and feelings, tells us that 'his nature was peculiarly social, and could not feel satisfied with scenery, however grand in itself, that did not abound in human associations. He required villages, churches, farm-houses, and cottages.' On the other hand, we find Dr. Arnold in Warwickshire, gazing on the dull expanse of fields eastward from Rugby, and expressing his despair in the pathetic complaint—'It is no wonder we do not like looking that way, when one considers that there is nothing fine between us and the Ural mountains.' Now it so happens that the Constable country, the paradise of East Bergholt, Dedham, Lavenham, and the other little places that the artist loved so dearly, *did* lie in that very space between Dr. Arnold and the Ural mountains, which that lover of hill-scenery considered so hopelessly vacant. In all disputed matters of taste, when affection has any considerable influence, the man whom we ought to believe is he who speaks from love. Arnold is a better authority than Constable on the merits of the Lake district, but Constable, on the other hand, is a better authority than Arnold on the charms and qualities of eastern England. 'N'écoutez parler,' says Legouvé, 'que ceux qui adorent. Les froides et pâles déesses qu'on appelle l'équité, l'impartialité, ne voient qu'à travers des lunettes, l'amour seul voit avec des yeux.' If a painter loves a class of scenery which we look upon with indifference, all the knowledge is certain to be on his side of the question; and unless we resolutely shut our eyes against his teaching, he will be able to make us see beauties that we were blind to.

P. G. HAMERTON.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XIX.—P. G. HAMERTON.

Crossing the Loch.

THIS etching differs from other attempts of mine, in being the translation of a picture which I painted fourteen or fifteen years ago. In the original painting the sky shows an orange streak just above the purple hills (not a rare evening effect in the Highlands), and this bright orange light is reflected on the crests of the waves. Lest anybody should criticise the rig of the boat, I may add that I constantly used a mast and sail of this description, and found it a convenient rig. Nothing can be more delightful, to any one who enjoys fine scenery and can handle a sailing-boat, than to sail on one of the great Highland lochs in the twilight and watch the changing colour of sky and wave, and intensities of purple hills. When the day has been wild, and you have a broken sky with tossing unquiet water, and the wind falls at intervals and tightens your sail in fitful gusts, there comes upon the mind that *eerie* feeling which no other scenes or effects can produce in us so surely. And although that feeling is not one of gladness, although it is far indeed from merriment or gaiety, still there is a wonderful power in it for awakening whatever tenderness or earnestness may lie in the depths of our hearts. Of all the influences of external nature, it is this which penetrates most profoundly into our spiritual being, and most surely reminds us of all that the soul yearns for, and of all that she regrets.*

P. G. H.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER V.

IT is one of the most curious things in the practice of the fine arts, that there should be a great danger of losing some important and even necessary quality whenever our attention is directed to something that we had not so strongly cared about before. One of the best instances of this is the danger to the landscape-painter of caring too much for the beauty of leaves and flowers, although nothing in nature can be lovelier, and although it seems inevitable that landscape-painters, who are so much with nature, should feel powerfully attracted to these minor perfections, were it only as a collateral branch of independent study or unprofessional observation. An experienced artist told me that he had been led, one year, to the especial study of leaf-beauty, and that although he had found the pursuit delightful in itself, and quite a new revelation of wonder and loveliness, the effect of it on his practice as an artist had been positively pernicious, at least until he discovered the cause, after which he considered himself duly warned, and abandoned it. When the attention is occupied by the exquisite lines of curvature in leaves it loses sight of their effect in masses, which is all that the landscape-painter ought to trouble himself about, and which, in itself, is a study so difficult as to absorb all the energies of the mind. Nothing can be more agreeable in art-study than to gather sprigs of different trees and plants, and draw them with the care necessary to loving and faithful representation. The artist, whilst he is occupied in work of this kind, has the pleasure of seeing a result which is indubitably beautiful; for any representation of near leafage, made with adequate care and skill, is quite sure to be full of grace. But this satisfaction is a dangerous one for landscape-painters, because it diverts their thoughts and efforts from the effect of foliage, which can only be given by the most resolute interpretation and the most complete neglect of imitative accuracy. The truth is, that we have here one of those curious problems which can only be solved by understanding, in the first place, that we have to deal with two different and incompatible states of mind; and in the second place, by understanding what *are* those different states. He who sets himself to design a separate leaf, or, what amounts to the same thing, a group of leaves, that he can clearly distinguish as individuals, can only bring his work to perfection by giving predominance to the faculty of analysis; whilst the landscape-painter, who largely interprets foliage in masses, must work by the most comprehensive synthesis. The first may imitate, the second *must* interpret. The difficulties which have to be overcome by the true landscape-painter are not those of delicate linear design, which he hardly ever requires, but the difficulties —less tangible but not less real—of natural intricacy, obscurity, confusion. The only thing which can be urged in favour of accurate detail-study is this. It may be said, that in the confusion and obscurity of nature there are still certain details which come into momentary prominence, and that it is necessary to be able to draw these details in their place. A few leaves in a foreground may be almost as clearly defined as the leaves on the spray we have gathered with the hand; they may be of importance enough to require careful definition in the picture, and therefore the artist who has prepared himself by much previous study of *the leaf*, taken separately, will treat such details with greater firmness and accuracy, when necessary, than he who is ignorant of their nature. Yes, there is truth and reason in this; but the danger still remains, that the very perfection of his knowledge may lead such an artist to display it too obtrusively, and so injure the unity of his composition, and its effect as a work of art. The best light for our guidance in any matter of this nature is simply the practice of those artists who were *artists* in the most essential meaning of the word—men whose works had the great artistic qualities of unity, breadth, interpretative power; the men who could produce what may justly be called *une œuvre magistrale*. Now these great landscape-painters have frequently drawn foreground leafage for their own instruction, yet never, so far as I have been able to ascertain, in such a manner as to detach it from the general intricacy of nature. They would not take a leaf of bramble home and draw it as a flower-painter or botanist would draw it, but they might make a memorandum of the hedge in which it occurred, with a dozen other plants, and then give it just the degree of prominence and definition that it had in its place in nature. I know an eminent landscape-painter who has given to the subject of leaf-beauty the utmost degree of attention which appears to be compatible with comprehensive pictorial work, yet although he has drawn thousands of memoranda in pen-and-ink, representing every plant important enough from its size to hold visible place in a picture, every one of his memoranda includes matter enough to give intricacy and confusion, so that you can never find half-a-dozen leaves in perfect form and definition. Besides this, he draws them always *as they grow*, and simply as they strike the eye, not for separate delicacies, detaching nothing that was not detached before, and dwelling upon no perfection that needed artificial isolation to make it evident.*

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* I may just mention, for any reader who is interested in the practical part of etching, that this plate was done in the bath by the positive process. It required, of course, several different sittings and regroundings.

The true doctrine appears to be, that whilst the painter can never know too much of natural truth, can never be too thoroughly grounded in the laws both of organic form and local colouring, he cannot produce masterly work until all this knowledge sits quite lightly on his mind, and is absolutely subordinated to truth of relation. Deschanel, in his clever and amusing 'Essai de Critique naturelle,' gives a description of an English landscape-painter addicted to botanical study; a description slightly caricatured, yet probably drawn from some living instance, and accurate in the main:—'Il s'en va herboriser par champs, s'assure que tel *vegetable* a les feuilles pointues ou découpées de telle façon, que telle fleurette a une telle corolle et tant de pétales; qu'il y a d'ailleurs dans la nature des rouges violents, des verts crus, des jaunes impitoyables, beaucoup de violet,' &c. Well, this may be true with reference to some painters of that young realist school which was flourishing in England when M. Deschanel wrote his book, and he may have met with some English artists who were also botanists; but the harm is not in the study of plants, it is in the forgetfulness of large relations to which this minute observation of nature has occasionally led those who were addicted to it. It is well to know the plants with a loving familiarity that observes the minutest detail, but the great harmonies of natural effect and colour concern the landscape-painter more closely. Here, for example, is an effect which, if painted in a masterly manner, with sufficient taste and feeling, would reward the labour of an artist:—One day in January I was riding in the forest, where the ground is closely planted with young oaks, and the sun was setting behind them. The material was almost monotonous in its simplicity,—one species of tree, and a sunset with no elaboration of cloud-form, but merely a suffusion of yellow light in a sky heavily charged with vapour. The trunks of the trees were all grey, the sun-gold pale yellow; and as the light was well concentrated, and brilliantly scattered to right and left, but always from one central point, it was just one of those simple and harmonious arrangements of light and colour which are adapted to the purposes of art. It happened, too, that this colour-harmony of gold and grey was precisely the one which an artist may attack without incurring the certainty of defeat from the unapproachableness of natural illumination, for yellow is the one colour which may be made luminous in painting without much sacrifice of its chromatic quality: had the sunset been a red one, the difficulty (as every painter knows) would have been immeasurably increased, and, indeed, would have involved the necessity of painting the whole subject in so low a key, that the beautiful greys of the forest would have been lost in dark neutral tints far below the pearly tones of nature. This would have been seen by an artist like Diaz as a flashing of gold on grey intricacy, and he would have painted it exactly in the way best fitted to convey that impression. Another very fine effect, often visible in winter at the hour of sunset, is the illumination of the trees to the east of you. When the light of sunset catches the dead foliage of a forest of oaks their tops burst into sudden flame, so that the forest seems all on fire. The impression is greatly heightened if you are unable, from your position, to see the western sky, which is the origin of the light. Now, for the powerful rendering of such effects as these, the knowledge of plants need only be that which every artist is sure to possess who has been in the habit of sketching from nature; but

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* Constable deprecated the study of single leaves without reference to masses. In the year 1824 he kept a diary, from which the following is an extract:—'Went to tea with Mr. Ottley. Saw some beautiful prints. Such a collection of Waterloo's etchings I never saw. There was also an abundance of his own things, *which gave me a great deal of pain; so laborious, so tasteless, and so useless, but very plausible. They were all of the single leaf, and chiefly laurels, weeds, hops, grapes, and bell vines; and ten thousand of them.*'—LESLIE'S *Life of Constable*, chap. viii.

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whenever a painter desires to give something of the beauty of foreground detail, and he may well desire this without abandoning his pictorial purposes and intentions, then it is most convenient for him to know the plants scientifically. I cannot think that the Englishman in M. Deschanel's book was wrong even in using a microscope, though the idea conveyed is that he did so in order to be able to delineate microscopically. There is an obvious *non-sequitur* here. It does not follow that because an artist happens to use a microscope to dissect some plant in order that he may afterwards remember it, he will necessarily draw the plant otherwise than as it simply appears to the naked eye—to the educated eye—in its subordinate place in nature. Possibly M. Deschanel might argue that the landscape-painter need not trouble himself even about the names of plants, since he does not write their names upon his canvas, and no doubt these plants have existed for innumerable generations before any nomenclature was contrived for them, still he may surely avail himself of what is nothing more than a convenient *memoria technica* all ready to his hand. The objection does not seem to be so much to the knowledge of a little botany, as to the habit of *drawing* plants minutely in isolation; and this habit is not injurious for the knowledge which it conveys, but because it encourages us to neglect the more important truths of relation, and makes us think we have done something good and useful, when, in fact, we are busy in an occupation which is not fine art, and which is incomparably easier than fine art. Any young student whose eye for form has attained a tolerable degree of accuracy may soon draw studies of detached leaves very beautifully, and then he is likely to fall into a sort of mechanical routine which is the indolence of the industrious in all the handicraft trades. The only kind of study at all resembling this which may be permitted to a real artist, is work done on the principles of Jules Jacquemart in his etchings of flowers. There you have leaf-drawing certainly, and careful copying of petals and calices, yet always subordinated to the effect of the bouquet as a mass.

Before quitting the subject of leaf-drawing let me add, that careful memoranda of leaves and other objects may often be done with great advantage by those who are not troubled with any artistic ambition. They aid the memory wonderfully, and enable it to retain truths of form and colour with an accuracy that may be of the greatest advantage in many studies and occupations. Much mechanical drawing is bad, because the draughtsman has looked only to those characteristics of plants which may be technically described in scientific language: these things he sees, but he fails to see the beauty of natural curvature even in those very forms where it is most conspicuous. Now it would be perfectly possible, and a worthy object of ambition to any student who really loved nature in a catholic and comprehensive way, to preserve the strictest botanical truth in the delineation of plants, and yet add to it the true loveliness of their forms, the exquisite changes of curve and surface which the accidents of perspective are incessantly producing. Such an enterprise might not be directly remunerative in the pecuniary sense, for scientific students appear to be satisfied with the sort of drawing which sets down what they want to know, whilst lovers of art are satisfied with nothing short of full artistic synthesis both in conception and execution, and yet the sort of work I now suggest would reward the labourer by certain delicate, intimate satisfactions of its own.

There are often very brilliant colours in the wintry landscape, but the difficulty in making artistic use of the material that it presents would be to harmonise the colour-material into synthesis. You may find very fresh-looking greens, and very bright reds, but there is a want of quieter colour in their neighbourhood sufficiently resembling them in quality to lead up to them as a climax. The colouring of nature is not always good or available for art, any more than all her plants for food, and it is one of the first results of culture in an artist when he is able to perceive this. It is mere fanaticism to speak of the fortuitous arrangements of colour which occur in natural scenery as examples of divine art which it is impiety to criticise. The simple truth is, that a plant will bud or fructify at a time determined by the action of heat or moisture upon its vessels, without the least reference to its effect upon a colour-composition in the landscape. For instance, you may have a bush of eglantine, which will be a perfect mass of vermilion on account of its fruit. The stalks will be a very dark purple in shade, but crimson in the evening light, and they intensify the vermilion of the berries. Ten to one, this piece of splendour will be entirely isolated, and it will kill all the delicate colouring in its neighbourhood, as a scarlet coat kills a modest landscape in the Academy. Or you may have the fine rich green of broom, most valuable in itself, especially in large masses, yet by its very richness likely to make you feel more acutely the wintry poverty of the decayed vegetation around it, and the naked branches overhead. A judicious artist might avail himself of these materials, but he would never permit them to injure the unity of his work, a kind of unity necessary in human art but outside of the aims of nature. The seasons when nature is most harmonious are the late summer and the earliest weeks of autumn, but in winter and spring she colours accidentally and in patches. Woods in the mass, however, are often grandly harmonious even in January, with their rich brown in nearest scenery passing through purple in the middle distance to a deep neutral tint on distant hills. On the edges of woods the white stems of the birches tell very effectually against dark purple as silvery lines, even at a considerable distance. In the immediate foreground all lichens and mosses assume an unusual importance during winter; in the case of the mosses because they are really more brilliant, as they prosper and grow in moisture, whilst the lichens gain a more than common degree of prominence from the comparative poverty of the decayed vegetation around them. There are hedges so invaded by pale green tufted lichen that it becomes in winter the principal element of their colouring; and not a disagreeable element, being delicate in hue notwithstanding its opacity.

The wintry landscape is a museum of dried vegetation, bearing much the same resemblance to the verdant wealth of summer that a mummy does to a living human being, yet with the difference that the vegetable mummy often retains the most graceful elegance; and this, it is to be feared, can scarcely be said of any Egyptian princess, however distinguished in her time. Indeed I may go so far as to assert that some plants are positively more elegant as mummies than they were when the sap circulated in all their vessels. There is the common teazle, for example, which in winter acquires a quite remarkable perfection of curvature in all its leaves. There is a clump of them not far from the Val Ste. Véronique, of which the tallest is nearly eight feet high, and so very perfect and delicate that if some skilful goldsmith were to copy it as it stands in pure Australian gold (silver would be too chilly in tint) all Paris would wonder at its loveliness. Not a leaf of it but is fit to be the model for an archbishop's crozier, and round the head rise the thin bracts like guards, still perfect, every one of them, though the tall stem has swayed in the autumn storms. As to that head itself, what a miracle of texture! Warm reddish brown in the sun, and at a short distance seeming soft as fur, but nearer a delicate net-work.

Another very fine plant in winter, happily very common in many places, is the great mullein, which, though it does not equal the teazel in elegance, far surpasses it in the expression of melancholy ruin. Still it retains some rich, thick, pale, dusty, cottony leaves, between the earth and the blackened raceme where the pale yellow flowers once clustered so gaily in the sunshine, but the large outer leaves have faded and lost form, and become mere brown rags, like the tatters of miserable poverty, drenched by the rains of winter, and draggled on the mud of the cold inhospitable earth. Of all the plants that grow, the mullein in its decay comes nearest to that most terrible form of human poverty when the victim has still, to his misfortune, vitality enough for mere existence, yet not enough to make existence either decent or endurable. Groups of them will be found together, still strong enough to bear up against the bitter wind that tears their rags into more pitiable raggedness, and flings foulness on their wet and withered leaves, to stick there, like contumely, till they die. Some freshness lingers yet within their folds, like hidden and tender recollections, some softness and a little warmth, but their misery is like that awful destitution that stands clothed in the last shreds and remnants of prosperity.

The ferns and grasses bear the season better, and retain almost every charm but colour.

The forms of fern are still complete, and the plant still bears itself with a perfect grace, except where it has been exposed to injury, and then it will often be broken, for it is more fragile now than in the elasticity of summer. There are grasses which survive with all their elegance, and their delicate pale spears stand perfect in the air of winter, bending at every breath, and bearing trembling plumes, yet recovering themselves always. I value, too, the great old dead stalks of the bramble, all quite hoary and grey, with nothing but thorns upon them. They are often twelve or fifteen feet long, and trail about the hedges much more visibly at this season than when hidden under the summer leafage.

The blackthorn is valuable for the abundance of its dark purple fruit, as big as common grapes, and covered with a beautiful blue-grey bloom. The whole colouring of this plant in winter is strikingly harmonious, for the stem and twigs are of a pleasant purplish grey, which the fruit continues in another variety. It is well worth painting in studies of still-life for its peculiar quality of texture. The whitethorn is less harmonious, but richer, with the multitudes of its dark vermilion berries, in masses quite sufficient to affect the colouring of a foreground. Whilst the blackthorn is entirely bare of leafage at this season, the whitethorn is not altogether bare, but will often retain foliage rather abundantly in sheltered corners, and its remaining leaves are of a very warm brown, which sustains the berries well, and is better than the contrast of green. The way in which green will be preserved or lost in winter is one of the most curious things about the local colouring of landscape. For example, in the case of rushes, the green remains vividly where there is water, except at the tops of the blades, which are tipped with yellow; but in drier places the whole rush is pale yellow, often giving most brilliant and effective white lines, even when there is no sunshine to relieve them. Then you have the peculiar green of the mistletoe, often existing in such quantities as to give at a little distance quite a summer-like appearance to the tree it has chosen to establish itself upon. Seen nearer, the green is made perceptibly less powerful by the wax-like berries, which, being of a very pale greenish white, neither intensify the green by contrast, as scarlet would have done, nor yet sustain it by a continuation of its own colour. The mistletoe is, to my taste, one of the most beautiful plants we have; and I like its colouring exceedingly, both because the hue of the leaves is not a vulgar green, and also because the fruit has the most exquisite delicacy of hue, in such perfect harmony with the leafage, that it seems tinted by a faint reflection.

There is a great deal of pleasant green in winter, due to the delicate minute mosses that often cover the bark of certain trees; as for instance, the quince-tree and the acacia. In some such cases the bark seems positively painted, and is quite bright in the wintry sunshine. Such moss-painted trunks and branches are a great resource when there happens to be holly in the foreground, which is dangerous from its isolation and the intensity of its green, derived from contrast with the scarlet berries. One of the best things about the holly is the variety given by the lighter colour of the under-side of the leaf, but it is not a very safe plant for the painter, as it offers a peculiar temptation to obtrusiveness both of crude colour and of what may be called irritating detail, neither has it any softness of mass or grace of contour. For any one who enjoys the sight of red berries in the most jewel-like splendour there is nothing in winter like the viburnum, the species we call *viorne obier* (a relative of the guelder-rose of gardens); and if you meet with a fine specimen just when it is caught by the level rays of a crimson sunset, you will behold a shrub that seems to have come from that garden of Aladdin where the fruits of the trees were jewels. The birds love these splendid berries, and it is said that in Norway they are served at table for dessert. I have not forgotten the mountain-ash, but in January, although it still has berries, the most of them are withered and have lost their beautiful colour; however, they still keep a rich crimson vermilion tint. Nothing in the beginning of the year can be prettier than the hazel, with its thousands of pendulous catkins, all of a very pale and tender and lovely green in the sunlight; they remind one of filigree, or the work in the fringe of epaulettes.

It is a great advantage of the winter season for the study of sylvan nature that it enables us to see the structure of trunks and branches so much better than we ever can do when they are laden with summer foliage. Of all trees at this season of the year my favourite is decidedly the walnut. Its bark is magnificent in the strength of the deeply-furrowed lines which mark it (tempting beyond measure to an etcher), and its fine pale greys exhibit to perfection that wealth of dark mosses which the landscape-painter knows and values. Besides this, there is so much grandeur in its far-spreading, powerful arms, that it is well for us to see them during part of the year without their voluminous green sleeves. Happily for the beauty of many a village the walnut is productive during life, so that it is allowed to come to full maturity. The oak is inferior both in form and colour, and expresses only a sturdy strength. The ash shows her grace of structure, her tall and elegant limbs, whilst her bunches of 'keys' hang like ornaments on the lofty branches; and there will be a little rich green moss, perhaps, about her foot, and on her trunk one or two different kinds of lichen, either grey or golden. As for the towering poplar, there will be nothing whatever on all his height but here and there a remnant of last year's leaves, withered and curled, whilst the branches whiten towards the summit. The alder would be almost as naked were it not for the quantities of brown catkins, which give a deep and rather rich colour at a distance. All the branches of the horse-chestnut are tipped with brown buds, whose abundant adhesive varnish protects the tiny leaf rudiments, all snugly wrapped in cotton. The ground beneath is strewn with the sere leaves of the preceding year, and the smooth-rinded old mahogany-coloured fruit.

My presence in the Val Ste. Véronique had the good effect of saving some trees from the woodman's axe, and by way of compensation I gave myself the pleasure of making an opening here and there to obtain glimpses of scenery, where the brushwood was as impenetrable as a jungle. Of all country occupations I think this is the most interesting, whilst planting is perhaps the most satisfactory. It is flattering to the vanity of a creature so ephemeral as man to feel that he is settling the fate of oaks that might live for a thousand years. No sentiment can be more foolishly thrown away than that which would preserve all trees until they were rotten: it is best to cut them in their fullest maturity before decay begins. Still there are exceptions to this rule, and the chief of these are the cases where a tree is valuable in life, either from its position as an ornament of scenery or else from association with past generations of men. How much of the beauty of the scenery we love best may be dependent upon the magnificence of a few trees which, once gone, a hundred years would not replace, we do not adequately realise until accident or avarice has removed them. All scenery that is not positively mountainous owes to sylvan beauty nearly all its charm and attraction, and even where trees abound the whole dignity and character of some house or village may be dependent upon the immediate neighbourhood of two or three venerable oaks or walnuts. And in the heart of the forest, remote from any human habitation, there may be scenes of the most striking grandeur, which would be utterly ravaged by the destruction of some venerable company of giants who have lived there side by side for full five hundred years. There is one such solitude in a narrow dell about a league from the Val Ste. Véronique. It is just at the end of a little valley, where a streamlet glides down a grassy slope rounded into the smoothest curves. On this slope stand twelve gigantic brethren, chestnuts, which by a happy fatality have escaped the axes of many successive generations. They have no definite association with human history; they have dwelt together in this solitude undisturbed by the fall of dynasties or the noise of distant battle-fields. No king has ever sought refuge in their foliage, no general has encamped or held council beneath their shade. Only the birds have made nests in their world of leaves, and the wild deer found repose in the coolness of their shadowy seclusion. No poet has ever sung them, no lover ever carved linked initials on their bark. And yet the man would be dead to all sylvan feeling who could go into that valley, axe in hand, and look at these ancient brethren with a base calculation of their price. Can we not spare a narrow spot of ground, where ground is worth so little, in order that one group of trees may reach the limit of their age, in order that we may see both what they are and what they may become? Every sapling in the forest gains dignity from their imposing presence, and he who has once beheld them in their place may read with better understanding the verse of those great old poets who wrote when such princes of the forest might be met with more frequently in the land. Think what was Spenser's conception of the forest, and what in our own time is too often the uninteresting reality. He thought of it as a country shaded by a great roof of green foliage, which was carried on massive stems always so far apart that one or several knights could ride everywhere without inconvenience; but we find the reality to be for the most part an impenetrable jungle of young trees, that will be cut down in a year or two for firewood. Ah, let us still preserve some dwelling of sylvan majesty, where the poet may dream and the artist may study, and both may forget the cares and interests of the present! Are there not still left to us, here and there in the deep woods, such vales of ancient peace that wandering Una may haply meet us there; or some splendid knight of fairy-land, like him whose glittering crest danced joyously as the rustling foliage of an almond-tree,

> 'On top of greene Selinis all alone?'

P. G. HAMERTON.

THE FATHER AND BROTHER OF BENJAMIN WEST.

LITHOGRAPH FROM "THE FAMILY PICTURE."

THE portraits on the opposite page were intended to accompany Mr. Colvin's article on BENJAMIN WEST, which is unavoidably postponed until our next number.

They form the central portion of that well-known *Family Picture*, the whole of which could not be conveniently given in THE PORTFOLIO. They represent the father and the elder brother of the artist.

John West, the father of Benjamin West, belonged to a family of Quakers, who left England for America in 1699. He, John, was at that time at school, and was therefore left in England. He did not join his family in America until 1714.

Before quitting his native land for America he had married, and left his wife in England until he should have found a new home for her. She gave birth to a son, and died. The father wrote to her family, desiring to have the child sent out to him. But her relatives in England had become attached to the child, and desired to adopt him. At last John West consented that his first-born son should remain in England.

Some twenty years after this John West married a second time, his wife's name being Sarah Pearson. A second son, named Benjamin, was the offspring of this marriage, and the date of his birth is given as October 16, 1738. More than twenty years, therefore, would intervene between the two. And while the younger rose to the position of President of the Royal Academy, the elder brother remained quietly content in his watch-maker's shop at Reading.

THE THREE CATHEDRALS DEDICATED TO ST. PAUL.*

THIS work, published unofficially by the Chairman of the Finance Committee for the so-called completion of St. Paul's, gives in a short and readable form a fair history of the fabrics which have existed as the Metropolitan Cathedral upon the same site. Its scope and intention differ mainly from Dean Milman's 'History of St. Paul's' in affording more of accurate technical information and less of associated topics of general history. Also the methods by which funds were raised for former fabrics are dwelt upon at greater length than their general interest would lead us to expect, did we not reflect that the writer is Financial Chairman, and that he may be anxious as such to lead his readers to emulate the virtues of their ancestors. Possibly too, the large amount of material upon this subject supplied by Dugdale, in an account in other respects somewhat scanty, may have proved a strong temptation to the author.

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* A History of the Three Cathedrals dedicated to St. Paul in London, with reference chiefly to their Structure and Architecture, and the Sources whence the necessary Funds were derived. By William Longman, F.S.A. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1873.

The illustrations of the Cathedral of the Middle Ages are plentiful and instructive, consisting mainly of reduced fac-similes of a 'restoration' of St. Paul's elaborated, apparently with much care and judgment, upon the basis of such drawings and historical documents as are extant. Perhaps this method of illustration is the best which could be arrived at for giving a general idea of the intention of the building; but the general reader is scarcely sufficiently guarded against giving to this restoration a too distinct historical value: to avoid which error he should bear in mind that probably at no one time did the building present an appearance of entire completion, that delay and destruction continually interfered with the entireness of the design, and that very many features exhibited in the drawings are from the insufficiency of records necessarily conjectural.

It would be superfluous to give an abbreviated version of Mr. Longman's history of the mediæval fabric. Any one who has any interest in the subject will find the record sufficiently brief. It is rather with the history and prospects of the present Cathedral that we are more immediately concerned.

The Restoration found the Metropolitan Cathedral in a most ruinous and debased condition. Inigo Jones' attempts to classicise, the neglect of centuries, and the sacrilege of the Commonwealth, had reduced the fabric to an almost hopeless condition. Under these circumstances Sir Christopher Wren, lately appointed King's Surveyor, was called in to prepare designs for the renovation of the Cathedral. The first design, preserved in the collection of drawings in the All Souls' College Library of Oxford, and of which Mr. Longman gives a reproduction, shows the nave converted into Corinthian, the Gothic divisions of arcade, triforium, and clerestory being preserved, the erection of a central dome, the space for which is produced by cutting away the piers of the crux of the Gothic building, while the choir retains its original character. The dome in this design is formed of an internal brick vault and an external cupola of timber, the whole surmounted by a lofty pinnacle, somewhat resembling an elongated pine-apple crowned with three balls diminishing upwards in size and terminating in a cross. This, or some modification of this, would no doubt, but for the Great Fire, have been our St. Paul's in the present day; and on the whole, the absolute destruction has in the event proved preferable to the alternative of a mongrel of crude and eccentric Italian and coarsely renovated Gothic. The loss of the monuments, which, judging from Dugdale's account and illustrations, must have been almost unrivalled in beauty and interest, is indeed heavy; but in the restoration of the Cathedral their fate would have been at least doubtful, and their record remains with us. These designs were completed the very year of the fire, which of course radically changed the entire conditions of the renovation.

Leaving unnoticed certain designs made by Wren 'for discourse sake'—that is, to ascertain what kind of building would be generally acceptable—we come next in order to the second important design for an entirely new Cathedral. This design, of which a model, partly mutilated, is still preserved, was that which the architect always preferred. And, undoubtedly, the opinion held by many, that the interior effect would have been vastly superior to that of the present building, seems amply justified. Mr. Longman gives a perspective view, taken from the nave, which shows how spacious, how simple, and yet varied, the arrangement would have been. Externally, no doubt, the result is less successful. The sense of airy lightness, the impressive composition, the dignity of the present exterior, would probably have been absent. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the design might have been so matured in the execution as to have equalled the present Cathedral even externally, these comparative defects not being inextricably associated with the general character of the plan.

This design was put aside because 'the Chapter and some others of the clergy thought the model not enough of a Cathedral fashion; to instance particularly, in that the choir was designed circular,' and that there were no aisles or naves. This objection, which must have resulted from an insufficient knowledge of the radical changes introduced by the Renaissance, fixed the conditions under which Wren had to work in the next design which he submitted, and accounts for most, if not all, of the leading defects in the present building. Besides the necessity thus imposed of following a mediæval arrangement, another obnoxious concession was exacted from the architect by the influence of the Duke of York; namely, the insertion of the excrescences on either side of the western portion of the nave, intended to serve as oratories in the event of a revival of Catholicism in England. Under these circumstances Wren prepared his last design for St. Paul's, which received the Royal assent as being 'very artificial, proper, and useful.' Mr. Longman reproduces the drawing of the west front of this design, with the Royal assent appended. Those who expect to find in it any hint of the features, character or beauty of the existing building, will be disappointed. No common element is apparent, and the entire design is so poor and wretched, that it is scarcely less marvellous that the architect should have been capable of producing aught so bad, than that he should from such a starting-point have attained to the success of the present building. The King had given him 'liberty in the prosecution of his work to make variations, rather ornamental than essential,' and it was by a very liberal exercise of this license that an absolute change in the design was produced.

The proper authorities having thus been obtained, and funds raised for the commencement of the building, the next step was to clear the site of the remains of the mediæval Cathedral, and to form a new foundation. The conditions of the soil Wren found to be peculiar, and at one point the cause of considerable difficulty. He found that the old building had rested on a considerable bed of pot-earth, below which was a bed of movable dry sand, and below this again was the natural hard clay. The 'pot-earth,' if of sufficient depth, would form a sufficiently firm foundation; but, on approaching the north-east corner of the building, Wren discovered that the clay had been almost entirely cut away. His solution of the difficulty was to 'sink a pit of about eighteen feet square . . . . till he came forty feet lower into water and sea-shells. He bored through this beach till he came to the original clay. Being then satisfied, he began from the beach a square pier of solid, good masonry, ten feet square, till he came within fifteen feet of the present ground; then he turned a stout arch underground to the former foundation, which was broken off by the untoward accident of the pit. Thus the north-east coin of the choir stands very firm, and no doubt will stand.'

The first stone of the Cathedral was laid on June 21, 1675, and in 1710, when Sir Christopher Wren had attained to the seventy-eighth year of his age, the highest stone of the cupola was laid by his son in his presence. The jealous and overbearing interference with which the architect was treated during the latter part of the building are sufficiently notorious. It is worth while, however, to consider to what extent the building was modified by external suggestion and interference, and how far these modifications involve the principal defects of the building as it now exists.

As we have already seen, Wren's first design for an entirely new Cathedral was rejected in deference to the surviving influence of the Gothic plan, the only one with which the clergy were familiar. The original design showed a simplicity of internal arrangement which contrasts very favourably with the intricacy which in the existing Cathedral notes the combination of two conflicting ideas; while the success of the present exterior is so little the result of the internal conditions that it seems reasonable to suppose that the architect's ideas might have been developed as successfully on the basis of the earlier arrangement. From the vast mass of conflicting criticisms which have lately been launched upon the fabric, those which the more general assent appears to indorse may all be shown to result from the duality of plan and style. Of the present arrangement of nave and aisles the most obvious results are—first, the complete independence of the external and internal appearance, the aisle walls being carried up externally as a screen wall to the full height of the nave. Even if we can put aside all sense of untruth in such a treatment, there still remains the fact of a vast sacrifice of space which conflicting necessities alone can excuse. The next defect of importance is the insufficient width of the four main arches entering the dome, and closely involved with this the awkward and ungainly arrangement of the four supplementary arches. A comparison of the sections of the former design with those of the existing Cathedral will show at once how the simpler and earlier plan would have avoided these difficulties, and how inevitably the entrance of a central dome by three aisles of unequal height must produce the awkward necessities which all the ability and ingenuity of the great architect have in vain attempted to obviate. Another defect which, always present, has become more obvious since the removal of the organ from its former position in the westernmost arch of the choir, is equally a result of the same conditions. This is the dropping of the windows of the apse to a lower level than those of the clerestory of the choir, of which range they are properly the crown and completion. The effect is thoroughly disappointing. The eye is brought suddenly and painfully down, and the sense of loftiness in the building is sacrificed at the very point where its importance was greatest. This, again, appears to be the obvious result of the continuity of the choir and apse, a condition which the Renaissance plan of the earlier design would have avoided, and which a Gothic vault would have satisfactorily resolved. Upon the much-debated question of the complicated constructional arrangement of the dome, Gothic prejudice appears to have passed much unjustifiable criticism. On the one hand, the interior dome is rather excessive than deficient in size for internal effect; while the unrivalled beauty and magnificent spring of the exterior is the one glory of our later national architecture, and a sufficient justification for even a more questionable ingenuity. On the other hand, Gothic critics, to justify the criticisms they habitually pass, might fairly be called upon to show that that is an arrangement essentially different in principle which covers a groined vault with an independent wooden roof, and that the entire space and height of the central towers of Gothic buildings are invariably utilised for internal effect.

The next important defect in the building is equally the result of a condition forced upon the architect—the introduction, namely, at the west end of the nave of the north and south chapels, which internally encroach upon the aisles and externally close up the returning angles of the western towers. The other defects are comparatively matters of detail. Most readers will remember how the balustrade round the dome was forced upon the architect in spite of his indignant and sarcastic remonstrances. 'I take leave,' he wrote to the Commissioners, 'first, to declare that I never designed a balustrade. Persons of little skill in architecture did expect, I believe, to see something they had been used to in Gothic structures, and ladies think nothing well without an edging. I should gladly have complied with the vulgar taste,' &c. Then the present heavy cast-iron railing, which cribs, cabins, and confines the building, and makes it hopeless to try and see its spring from the ground, was executed by the Commissioners themselves in the architect's despite. A minor defect is the treatment of the steps leading up to the west entrance, which were erected by Benson, Wren's successor, in whose favour the latter was dismissed.

What Wren had intended for the completion and decoration of the building, how his intentions were set aside, and how the building has been treated up to the present time, are subjects reserved for another number.

BASIL CHAMPNEYS.

CONSTABLE.

(*Continued.*)

CONSTABLE'S study of the figure led to two attempts in sacred history, altar-pieces for Brantham and Neyland churches. I have never seen these paintings, but Leslie, who knew what good figure-drawing was, and who certainly had no prejudice against the painter of these works, says that it is evident, from visible deficiencies, that a long course of study and practice would have been required before Constable could have done justice, if ever, to subjects of that class. He was by instinct a landscape-painter, and therefore, in all probability, little adapted for an entirely different branch of art; it may be, even less so than if his special gift had been weaker, for a special gift, as it grows into predominance, always atrophies the less decided gifts of its possessor. After the Neyland altar-piece Constable made no farther attempt in that direction, but confined himself entirely to landscape, and landscape of the class that had fixed his affections from the beginning. His Westmoreland excursion had led to the production of two or three pictures of mountain-scenery, but these were hardly more Constable's own subjects than sacred history, and his truest enthusiasm was awakened by such scenery as that of Hampshire. 'I spent ten days,' he says, 'in Hants, and was delighted beyond measure with the New Forest. I think it indescribably beautiful.' Yes, that was more likely to charm and interest Constable than the utmost glory of mountainous landscape. Though he entirely abandoned historical painting, he still occasionally executed a portrait, but, as Leslie tells us, with very unequal success; for his best works of the kind, 'though always agreeable in colour and breadth, were surpassed, in more common qualities, by men far inferior to him in genius.' And yet it may be presumed that the practice of portrait, though limited, was not without good effect upon his own especial labour as an artist; for portrait is the best and most satisfactory kind of painting from nature, and an excellent training in the study of object-painting, with certain limited effects of light and shade.

At the age of thirty-five Constable fell in love, and became greatly depressed both in body and mind in consequence of what appeared to be the hopelessness of his attachment. The lady was Miss Maria Bicknell, daughter of a solicitor to the Admiralty, and grand-daughter of the Rector of Bergholt, who opposed the match very decidedly, and with reason, for at that time Constable's profession was profitless. The lovers were engaged for five years, and wrote each other many letters. In the beginning of this correspondence the lady speaks frankly of her kind and friendly feelings, but discourages every gleam of hope, and writes with that saddened wisdom which is to a lover as depressing as any tone that a lady can possibly assume. 'Let me, then,' she says, 'entreat that you will cease to think of me. Forget that you have ever known me, and I will willingly resign all pretensions to your regard, or even acquaintance, to facilitate the tranquillity and peace of mind which is so essential to your success in a profession which will ever be in itself a source of continued delights.' The artist's father also gives him some excellent practical advice, in which (probably as a consequence of his own observation) he hits upon the commonest imprudences of unsuccessful painters. 'If my opinion were asked,' he says, 'it would be to defer all thoughts of marriage for the present. I would farther advise a close application to your profession, and to such parts as pay best. When you have hit on a subject, finish it in the best manner you are able, and do not in despair put it aside, and so fill your room with lumber.' This is really excellent, but what follows contains a pearl of good sense, which I shall put in italics for the especial benefit of young artists who are dissatisfied with themselves and their performances:—'I fear your great anxiety to excel may have carried you too far above yourself, *and that you make too serious a matter of the business, and thereby* *render yourself less capable. Think less, and finish as you go.'* Not to make too serious a matter of the business is one of the secrets of happy and effective workmanship in the fine arts. Quiet and light-hearted labour, with something of the spirit of play, carries an artist farther, and wears his mind much less, than the strain of intense effort and anxiety.

Notwithstanding Miss Bicknell's injunctions the lover continued his correspondence, and the lady continued her friendly and sensible replies. The quiet good sense of both, a little warmed, on one side at least, by the fire of a very powerful though suppressed passion, gives a sort of old-world charm to these letters, which a modern novelist might be proud to imitate completely if his art were equal to a nature so pure and delicate as this. Miss Bicknell is the wiser of the two lovers, and perceives with great regret that Constable is unsettled in his work by his attachment to herself. 'By a sedulous attention to your profession,' she writes to him, 'you will very much help to bestow calm on my mind, which I shall look for in vain while I see with sorrow how unsettled you appear, and consequently unfitted to attend to a study that requires the incessant application of the heart and head. You will allow others, without half your abilities, to outstrip you in the race of fame, and then look back with sorrow on time neglected and opportunities lost, and perhaps blame me as the cause of all this woe. Exert yourself while it is yet in your power; the path of duty is alone the path of happiness.'

In the year 1813 Constable's letters to Miss Bicknell become more cheerful. He says that he is leaving London for the only time in his life with his pockets full of money, and is entirely free from debt. He is quite delighted to find himself so well, though he paints so many hours, but 'his mind is happy when so engaged.' In 1814 he sells two pictures, a rare event with him; but these pictures are landscapes fairly sold in the open market of art, not portraits commissioned by friends and patrons. This greatly encouraged him to persevere in his own department of the art. In 1815 Miss Bicknell writes a delightful little note, informing her lover that the parental interdict is at last removed, and he may see her under her father's roof. Such, however, is the mixture of gladness and sorrow in the lives of mortals, that within a very short time from this increase of happiness Constable lost his mother, and a few days after this great bereavement Miss Bicknell lost hers. The relation between Constable and his mother had always been one of the most tender attachment, and she had furthered, with true and kindly sympathy, the interests which touched him most nearly, and were dearest to his heart and his ambition. It is sad that no far-seeing prophet could predict to her, with the assurance which makes doubt impossible, the present lustre of her son's name, his place in public and private collections, and the contests over his once-neglected landscapes in the great sale-rooms of the world.

The correspondence between the lovers went on in the same virtuous and amiable manner. Here is a little specimen of it, curiously illustrating the mixture of moral and religious feeling with devoted affection and severe self-government which predominates in these letters:—'I am happy to hear that your father is so friendly and kind to you. I shall always venerate him for his goodness to you, who are all the world to me. I am sure you will believe me, my dear Maria, when I say that I allow no bad disposition, nor any wrong feeling, to remain in my heart towards any one, for both our sakes. For should it be, as I trust it is, God's good pleasure that we should pass our lives together, it will be but sensible conduct, as well as a religious duty, to have as little to disturb our peace as possible; for as life advances our trials will increase, and at the end all our ill-conduct must be accounted for.' The quaint, old-fashioned simplicity of thought and feeling in this passage, so different from the tone of to-day, so impossible for us, may seem rather odd and strange, and not altogether remote from the ridiculous; yet how thoroughly good, and sound, and respectable a state of feeling it is! In all that is known to us about the love-affairs of men of genius, there is no story of constancy and fidelity more charming than this of John Constable and Maria Bicknell. There is more to excite emotion in the sadder history of Ampère and his

Julie, but no one who has read the two correspondences with attention will doubt that Constable was better loved than Ampère, or certainly better understood. Constable's engagement might have been prolonged until the death of Miss Bicknell's grandfather, Dr. Rhudde, the Rector of Bergholt, who always persistently opposed it, had not the lady herself fixed the wedding-day (2nd October, 1816) on her own responsibility. Three years later, the irreconcilable Dr. Rhudde died, and bequeathed them 4000*l*.

Leslie tells us that Constable's fondness for children exceeded that of any man he ever knew, and he was kept very happily supplied with these treasures, which he nursed with untiring zeal. He attained his utmost skill as a landscape-painter in the earlier years of his marriage, and yet remained altogether unnoticed by the public, which had its own favourites, now for the most part forgotten. In 1819 his large picture, *A Scene on the River Stour* (the picture with a white horse), attracted some attention, but it was purchased by a friend, Archdeacon Fisher; partly, no doubt, from a sincere appreciation of its merits, but also from a desire to be of service to an artist for whom Mr. Fisher had the warmest personal regard. The same good friend and admirer bought another large Constable in the year 1820, as a present for a solicitor who had rendered him some services. The price of these pictures was a hundred guineas each, which is the lowest price that can be considered remunerative for works of that size. The money, no doubt, was useful to Constable, but Mr. Fisher's intelligent appreciation was even still more beneficial to him at a time when he greatly needed a little moral support and encouragement. 'Believe me, my dear Fisher,' he says in a letter, 'I should almost faint by the way when I am standing before my large canvasses, were I not cheered and encouraged by your friendship and approbation. I now fear I shall never make a popular artist.' Then we find those little bitter bits that come from the unsuccessful. '*The art will go out*,' Constable writes; 'there will be no genuine painting in England in thirty years;' and in another letter he says, 'Should there be a National Gallery (which is talked of), there will be an end of the art in poor old England, and she will become, in all that relates to painting, as much a nonentity as every other country that has one.' Then he asks, with reference to a picture just finished, whether he had not better grime it down with slime and soot, as a connoisseur would probably prefer filth and dirt to freshness and beauty. This last *boutade* was fully justified by what happened much later, when a dealer or auctioneer actually *did* cover one of Constable's pictures (the *Waterloo Bridge*) with a coat of common blacking, fixed with varnish, to please the connoisseurs, who considered it a decided improvement. Still, in spite of much discouragement, he believes in his own powers and appreciates his own work, as every true artist both does and ought to do. 'My *Cathedral*,' he writes to Fisher, 'looks uncommonly well; it is much approved of by the Academy, and, moreover, in Seymour Street. I think you will say, when you see it, that I have fought a better battle with the Church than old H——e, B——m, and all their coadjutors put together. It was the most difficult subject in landscape I ever had on my easel. I have not flinched at the windows, buttresses, &c., but I have still kept to my grand organ colour, and have as usual made my escape in the evanescence of the chiaroscuro. Calcott admires my *Cathedral;* he says I have managed it well.'

Constable enjoyed his visits to friends who were interested in art, especially to Archdeacon Fisher and Sir George Beaumont. At Cole-Orton Hall (Sir George's house) the artist cordially appreciated the good social qualities of his host, and enjoyed the works of art that were collected there; but the two friends did not exactly agree on artistic questions, Sir George being much more traditional in his tastes than Constable was, though even Constable, as a critic, was more traditional than is generally supposed. The host believed in pictures as he found them; the guest did not avow that open infidelity which startled the world at a later period in the writings of a Graduate of Oxford; but he doubted whether the works of the infallible Poussin had reached us in such condition that we might receive that unquestionable teaching in its purity. Sir George placed a small landscape by Poussin on his easel close to a picture he was painting, and said: 'Now, if I can match these tints I am sure to be right.' 'But suppose, Sir George,' replied Constable, 'Gaspar could rise from his grave, do you think he would know his own picture in its present state? or if he did, should we not find it difficult to persuade him that somebody had not smeared tar or cart-grease over its surface, and then wiped it imperfectly off?' This is one anecdote out of several in which these two figures of the amateur and the painter stand for and represent the two distinct and hostile classes of the conventionalists and the naturalists in art. The power of conventional beliefs over the human mind considerably surpasses that of ocular evidence (well-known instances of this might be cited from the history of medicine), and it is not surprising that a man like Sir George Beaumont, who had the genuine conventional disposition, should have believed that a painted landscape ought to look like a Cremona fiddle, or should have retained his opinion after Constable had laid such an instrument on the green lawn in front of Cole-Orton Hall. It is in this part of Constable's life that we have the famous anecdote about the brown tree. Everybody interested in landscape-painting knows that Sir George Beaumont asked Constable whether he did not find it very difficult to determine where to place his brown tree, and that Constable replied—'Not in the least, for I never put such a thing into a picture!' These stories help us to understand Constable's true position in the history of art; his work was a practical revolt against the conventionalism of the eighteenth century, and one of many dissolvent or delivering forces which have at length enabled us to see nature without spectacles. Sir George Beaumont's spectacles were coloured brown, and we who have been accustomed for twenty years to colour of an exceeding frankness (not to say crudity) can, of course, very easily see that the elegant amateur of Cole-Orton had half blinded himself by prejudices that do not impede our eyesight in the least. It may be well for us, however, to remember that conventionalism may take an infinite variety of forms, and that it may establish itself just as easily in the crudest and rawest greens as in the dullest of browns or greys. Constable was not conventional, and yet a conventional school might be established in imitation of him. Even the most rigid and absolute naturalism would become conventional so soon as it interfered with the free expression of individual preferences and feelings. Sir George loved both art and nature, but there was a deferential and traditional element in his mind which led him to respect certain artists who were considered authoritative with a degree of veneration which limited his insight into nature. Indeed, although Sir George Beaumont was a sincere amateur of art, a man capable by constitution of taking the most unaffected delight in the works of great artists whom he appreciated, he was not himself an original artist, and entirely lacked that audacity which, as Goethe observed, is one of the characteristics of true artists. Constable, on the other hand, possessed this quality of audacity in the most eminent degree, and was as well fitted in this respect as either Turner or Wordsworth to be a soldier in the great struggle by which living artists have been emancipated from the authority of the dead, or rather from the tyranny of contemporary conventionalism which made use of dead men's names to hinder the work and repress the aspirations of the living.

The most valuable of Constable's friendships appears to have been that of Archdeacon Fisher. The Archdeacon really appreciated Constable's art, which Sir George Beaumont did not, and he loved Constable with a warm, personal affection. He was very keen and intelligent —his letters prove this—and his conversation must have been very interesting, for he was closely observant of human nature. Here is a phrase of his, rather severe, yet containing a great deal of truth,—'Men do not purchase pictures because they admire them, but because others covet them.' Fisher encouraged Constable when hardly any one else did, and the encouragement came in the most helpful of all forms, for it was not material wholly, nor yet wholly spiritual, but the happiest mixture of cheques and kind, intelligent letters. Constable would sometimes give himself an invitation to Fisher's house, which is quite enough to prove the delicacy of his friend's encouragement; for Constable was a proud and sensitive person, with all the characteristics of those who know that they are not adequately appreciated.

In 1826 he painted the *Cornfield*, which may be mentioned more particularly than his other works of that time, as it is now in the National Gallery. Constable writes in a letter,—'I have despatched a large landscape to the Academy, upright, of the size of the *Lock*, but a subject of a very different nature—inland cornfields, a close lane forming the foreground. It is not neglected in any part. The trees are more than usually studied, the extremities well defined, as well as the stems. They are shaken by a pleasant and healthful breeze at noon :

> "While now a fresher gale,
> Sweeping with shadowy gusts the fields of corn," &c.

I am not, however, without my anxieties, though I have not neglected my work or been sparing of my pains. . . . . My picture occupied me wholly. I could think of and speak to no one.' It might have been some consolation to Constable to know that the *Cornfield* would represent him in the National Gallery, if he had not been so strongly prejudiced against all National Galleries.

He loved his children with that true parental feeling which no mere sense of duty can ever imitate. He called them pet names, of course, and these pet names have all that wonderful originality which marks the true creations of the innermost sentiment of home. Thus he calls his boy William, not Billy, according to ordinary custom, but Belim ; and there is a charming anecdote of Belim which is worth preserving, even in so brief a biography as this. He was staying with Archdeacon Fisher, and the Archdeacon writes to his papa,—'When your pet, Belim, repeats his Catechism, we cannot make him say otherwise than, "and walk in the *same fields* all the days of my life." He might have a worse idea of happiness.' To this Constable answers,—'The anecdote of dear Belim is very pretty. Depend on it, the love of nature is strongly implanted in man. I have lately been into Suffolk, and have had some delightful walks "in the same fields." Bless the dear boy! our ideas of happiness are the same, and I join with you in praying that he may never seek it in less hallowed places.'

Up to the close of the year 1827 Constable's life had been decidedly a happy, though often an anxious one. The neglect of his works had, no doubt, to some extent stiffened and hardened his character (not towards those he loved, I do not mean that, but towards the world), but he had such an extraordinary gift of self-reliance that he could work on in spite of this. He had also been supremely fortunate in his marriage, and his paternal instincts were so strong that his family of seven children gave him a happiness far surpassing any anxiety they may have cost him. The year 1828, however, brought a shadow on his life that never afterwards quitted it. His beloved wife, Maria, became seriously ill of a malady which turned out to be pulmonary consumption, and after the usual sufferings she died. Their union had been too perfect for the happiness of the survivor, and although Constable inherited a good fortune from his wife's father, and was elected a Royal Academician in the following year, he could never fully enjoy either wealth or dignity without the companionship of her who had been to him so true a wife and friend. The irony of fortune has seldom been more strikingly illustrated than in the concurrence of these events. Ease and dignity come at last to the long-neglected artist; at last he can stand before a large canvas without anxiety, sure that it will be well hung in the Academy, and indifferent to the sale of it ; but then the wife who had shared with him the long years of discouragement is no longer there to congratulate him, as a loving woman only *can* congratulate, and to give sweetness to his peace. He had peace and dignity for his declining years, but the dignity was lonely, and the peace a saddened calm. On the day of his election he said, 'It has been delayed until I am solitary, and cannot impart it.'

P. G. HAMERTON.

(*To be continued.*)

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XX.—ALPHONSE LEGROS.

Peasant Women in the Neighbourhood of Boulogne.

THE readers of the *Portfolio* are already acquainted with the work of M. Legros, who contributed an etching to our twenty-seventh number. I made some observations at that time about the nature of his art, which it is unnecessary to recapitulate in this place. We have also published, in our ninth number, a notice of M. Legros' etchings by Mr. Sidney Colvin, in which our contributor said everything that was essential about the artist. A concentrated expression of what seems to me the truth about this peculiarly interesting painter and etcher would be very much as follows:—I should say that he is a poet full of deep gravity and pathos, always inclined to sober melancholy; sympathising most often, and perhaps most easily, with lives that are saddened by isolation, and absorbed in the monotony of constantly-recurring thoughts; whilst at the same time, either from instinct or from some decided theory and preference, this poet chooses to express himself in the very simplest artistic language that is attainable. The consequence is, that whatever may be his neglect of the 'dodges,' as artists call them, by which a very clever workman makes execution interesting for itself and in itself, there is always in the painting or etching of M. Legros a profound harmony between the thought and the work, which would vanish if he ever permitted himself to be tempted to exhibit common dexterities. It is all but impossible to reconcile much executive display with the kind of feeling which gives value to this artist's work. Everybody who understands art will perceive at once that the executant was an artist, and there are passages which no one but an accomplished artist could get through without a mishap; yet it seems to be, to him, a matter of indifference whether we appreciate his execution or not. I am inclined to think that this spirit—which, by the way, is entirely opposed to the delight in technical dexterity so prevalent in the modern schools—is on the whole a far higher and nobler spirit than that anxiety for manual skill which torments the minds of the majority. I rather believe that if artists could go to nature with a more complete forgetfulness of themselves, they would be more likely to preserve what is most precious in themselves. If art affect us, it is always really the artist who affects us; but he may succeed in doing this most completely when he is most himself, and thinks least about the demands of a public which cannot tell beforehand what will charm it most.

France is a country of very strange contrasts, and this contrast is noticeable amongst others—that whilst many French people spoil themselves by the utmost extreme of affectation, many other French people are just as remarkable for the entire absence of affectation; so that their simplicity is more simple than ours, and their directness more direct. This contrast has been very strikingly manifested in the French art of the last half century. Side by side, in the public exhibitions, with art of the most pretentious extravagance, grew up another school of art which discarded pretension altogether. Never was any realism so remarkable for simplicity of purpose as that of the genuine French rustic school. I do not mean the realism of the revolutionary realists, who called themselves so, but of that school which was entirely emancipated from classical authority, and used its liberty for the plain expression of its sentiment, not for the illustration of a theory. These artists were neither influenced by the authority of the classics nor by the force of the reaction against them; they worked in a calm corner of their own, safe from the flux and reflux of the great currents of their time. M. Legros is one of them; but instead of going amongst the oxen and the labourers in the fields, he prefers the solemnity of the village church, or the cathedral aisle, or the quiet monastery; and there he will watch his models, who know not that they are watched, and who reveal to him the secret of their meditations.

P. G. Hamerton.

THE GREEK FACE BEFORE PHIDIAS.

We are too apt to think of the Greeks as if during the whole period from Homer to Polybius, not to say from Homer to Agathias, the full spirit of the manifold works that they have bequeathed to us had been poured out upon every generation. We never try to think what the life of the contemporaries of Alcæus or Theognis was like upon the whole. We only use Alcæus and Theognis as data for determining the constituents of what we call 'the Greek spirit,' which was the spirit of no Greek generation, of no Greek city, not even of the Athens of Pericles, but rather the glorified ghost of all.

One of the minor results of this assumption, which we all make more or less unconsciously, is that we suppose, or think and speak as if we supposed, that the Greeks in general were like the Elgin Marbles. We know, of course, from the personalities of Plato's Dialogues, and from the more or less authentic portraits of the celebrated Greeks of the historical age, that this type was not permanent; for whether we suppose that the archetypes of the busts which had come down to us were genuine portraits, or simply reproductions of the normal face of the artist's contemporaries, individualised in some measure by the more or less successful introduction of traditional traits, it is equally clear that the type they represent is not the type of the Elgin Marbles. And the Greek face, as it exists now, is like the type of the historical busts and is not like the type of the Elgin Marbles, though some travellers profess to have found the latter still general round Misitra. If what we may call the Phidian type ceased to be general from, let us say, 450 B.C. onwards, we may ask, Was it ever general before? Perhaps this is not improbable; the limits of individual variation are much wider among a civilised race such as the Greeks had then become, than among a ruder race, where individuals differ only in the degree of perfection with which they conform to a common type. This suggests the further questions, Whether there was a general type which preceded the Phidian, and if so, whether we have any means for determining what it was?

Twenty years ago Mr. Scharf, in the account of Greek art which he prefixed to the third edition of 'Wordsworth's Greece,' remarked that a cat-like arrangement of the eyes was one of the common characteristics of all archaic Greek art, and the astounding sarcophagus from the Castellani Collection gives a new interest to such inquiries. At first sight it seems a very startling hypothesis that the Greeks could ever have been like that strange couple, with their short great toes, and hollow chests, and retreating foreheads, with the whole face converging to the mouth: it is startling to think that there have ever been such men at all, and that if they ever lived they must have lived little, if any more, than twenty-five centuries ago. If we are to assume that the rate at which it is possible for the prevailing type of face to change is absolutely fixed, we shall put the Castellani sarcophagus out of court altogether; we shall say it is impossible that the artist can have been representing what he saw: either he was incompetent or he was not serious. But it is certain that the rate is anything but fixed: the contrast between the first sitter of Kneller and the last sitter of Reynolds is decidedly less than the contrast between the first sitter of Lawrence and the last sitter of Millais; and both are dwarfed by the contrast between the first sitter of Lawrence and the last sitter of Reynolds; and this again by the contrast between the sitters of Vandyke and the sitters of Kneller. And if we go back a century from Vandyke to Holbein, we find a still greater divergence of type between the two extremes; while the well-marked Elizabethan type which comes between is sharply distinguished from both. And this is what we really ought to expect; the rate of change among men's habits and institutions is liable to the most surprising variations, and these, like their cast of countenance, are really the expression of their thoughts, and feelings, and wishes. We know that between 550 and 450 B.C. the Greeks went through the most complete and thorough mental transformation on record, and we ought not to be startled by evidence which points to corresponding physical modifications of an unusually rapid kind.

Still it may be objected that the cat-like arrangement of the eyes is too general a characteristic of early art to be significant in any single instance. It would require very full technical knowledge to dispose exhaustively of what this objection implies, and to pronounce with certainty how far, if at all, the mere inexperience of the hand and the eye would tend to force a type upon artists which there was nothing in their models to suggest. In default of such knowledge it may be observed, that if inexperience were the only cause, we should expect, *cæteris paribus*, to find this arrangement most marked in the earliest and rudest work. Now there is mediæval work without the peculiarity which is much ruder than Oriental work with the peculiarity: and there is typical mediæval work, like the Chessmen from the Hebrides in the British Museum, in which it would be paradoxical to trace any strong Romanic influence. Then, too, we find the peculiarity much more marked in the bust of Thothmes III., a king of the eighteenth dynasty, than in the statue of Mentu Hetp, an officer of the eleventh; while in the two great white busts of Rameses II. in the centre of the Egyptian Gallery at the British Museum it disappears altogether. Again it is less marked in the Man-headed Bulls and gigantic statues from Nimroud than in the metope from Selinus of Athene and Perseus; and though it may be said that the Assyrian work shows more feeling for artistic dignity than the Greek, it can hardly be said that it shows more artistic knowledge. Again, if we trust Egyptian art for the fact that the Egyptians had no perceptible depression between the forehead and the nose, and Assyrian art for the fact that the Assyrian eyebrows met there across a permanent wrinkle, why should we distrust both when they agree that the eyes pointed more or less upward towards the back of the head?

Further presumptions of the same order might be accumulated almost without limit, but perhaps these are enough to justify us in returning to the Castellani sarcophagus seriously, and examining it without prejudice. Two things strike us at once, and dispose us in its favour: one is, that though the work be very feeble and ignorant, it has a look of painstaking veracity about it—if it were not so startling we should call it lifelike; the other is more important. In the Homeric poems we discern a strong and unmistakable sense of human beauty, an evident delight in the contrast between smooth cheeks, and glossy tresses, and bright rolling eyes. Now these are just the elements of beauty which are present in the Castellani sarcophagus, for the wide orbits imply a great play of the eyeball within them.

And what do the retreating brow and the upward slope of the orbits imply? They imply simply this, that the movements of the jaw are the most important movements of the face; that instead of being fixed at an angle to the cheek-bone, the upper jaw moves freely in a line with it; or rather, that the motion of the whole head, often if not generally a downward motion, adapted to large masses of food in comparatively fixed positions, has not yet been superseded by the motion of the lower jaw, adapted to small and manageable morsels presented in variable positions by the hand; or, to put the same thing in another form, the position of the upper jaw has not yet been modified by the frequent upward movements of the lower and by its diminished size. In this connexion it is significant to observe that the Rakshasas, savages idealised into devils, who always appear in Hindoo legends with their jaws buried in carcases, are to be recognised, according to popular belief, by the upward slant of their eyes when they appear in human form. Now in Buddhist art—and all Indian art begins among the non-Aryan races which Buddha evangelised—this upward slant is always distinctly traceable.

It is to be observed, further, that the cheek-bone might have retained the position which it had inevitably in days when men were still coarse feeders, even after this cause had ceased to operate, unless other causes had come in to modify it. So that the question comes to be partly, When did the Greeks come to feed themselves decently with their hands, and what other causes carried the transformation up to a point which neither the Egyptians nor the Assyrians reached? Now it is obvious that the movement of the eye would tend to modify the orbit, if the latter be not assumed to have become absolutely rigid. Again, when the action of the lips in speaking and singing became more important than their action in swallowing, this would modify not only the lips themselves, but also their position in relation to the cheek. Still more decisive would be the growth of the brain, pushing the forehead upward and forward,* and forcing the whole skull to modify itself to meet the changed centre of gravity in the upper part of the head.

The Homeric Greeks were certainly not fine feeders; their habitual food was collops of half-burnt meat, served on spits, whence one fears they were pulled off with the teeth, and barley *pillaus* (that rarely attained the dignity of dough-cakes; baking, as Mr. Davies has pointed out in 'Hermathena,' No. 1, was unknown), which must have been consumed either by raising the bowl to the mouth, or by gradually gobbling up a fistfull; while the bread, which had become the staff of life in the historical period, was so hard that it had to be soaked in water, and therefore was probably eaten in small mouthfuls, that were raised genteelly between the finger and the thumb. Again, the Homeric Greeks used to be sung to at their feasts by an harper; the Historic Greeks sing themselves to the sound of a piper; and one of the chief advantages which they expect from a drinking-bout is that it will set them talking. As we have had occasion to observe already, the Homeric Greeks were remarkable for the mobility of their eyes, and this explains a curious peculiarity of the vases of the transition period: although the permanent lines of the face still converge on the mouth, the eye points abruptly upward as often as downward; obviously this would be so if the habitual position of the eye in the orbit was variable, while the orbit was not yet modified by its movement. A later stage of the transition we are imagining may be traced in the Æginetan Marbles; there the modifications which would be due to the special development of the lips and eyes are already established, but something of the old lie of the face still remains, which has completely disappeared in the works of the Phidian period.

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* The brain of the Macedonian race must have been comparatively undeveloped, accordingly the retreating brow reappears on the coins of Alexander's successors.

This suggests the further question, Was there any special cause tending to increase the plasticity of the organism that continued to work with increasing intensity up to the Phidian period? There certainly were two: one was the accelerating intellectual movement; the other, perhaps even a more decisive one, was the universal gymnastic training. Theognis, who 'flourished' 540 B.C., knows nothing of gymnastics as a part of education, though he is full of the opportunities a man has of forming himself at drinking-clubs. Pindar, less than two generations later, is full of athletics, as if they were the business of life. The fact is, the ascendancy of Sparta brought all Greece to the festivals held under Spartan protection at Delphi and Olympia, and then set all Greece training for them; and the enthusiasm thus created survived the undivided Spartan ascendancy for more than a generation, with the most fruitful consequences.

To resume. Unless on anatomical grounds it can be determined *à priori* that the limits of possible modification within historical times are insignificant, it is far from improbable that we can still trace in the rude remains of archaic Greek Art a transformation of the Greek face corresponding to the transformation which we know took place in the Greek mind.

G. A. SIMCOX.

CONSTABLE.

(*Continued.*)

MANY will remember the very fine mezzotint engravings which were executed by that admirable engraver, Mr. Lucas, from various pictures or designs by Constable, and published under the title 'English Landscape.' This was a scheme of Constable's, intended by him to perpetuate and extend the knowledge of his peculiar art, and to present his labours to the world in that mutually helpful association which is impossible with scattered canvases. The plan, in a word, was a collected and cheaper edition of Constable's *œuvre*, designed to be accessible to the general public; but it soon became evident that the general public cared very little for 'English landscape,' and the want of success attending this publication was certainly one of the bitterest disappointments of the artist's life, though he bore it, of course, with the fortitude of a manly nature. The failure in sale cannot be attributed to want of merit, either in the painter or the engraver. Constable's work was admirably adapted for engraving, from its fine arrangements of light and shade, and of all the kinds of engraving mezzotint was most suitable to it, whilst of all the mezzotint engravers who ever lived, David Lucas was the most thoroughly competent for such a piece of work as that which Constable entrusted to his accomplished hand. The project had everything in its favour except popular interest, but the want of this made it commercially a failure. The truth is, that any serious interest in that purest landscape art which is dependent upon the art alone for its attraction, presupposes a degree of culture which is rare even in our own day, and which in Constable's time, when England had half her present population and a quarter of her present wealth, must have been quite insufficient to pay for a work like that which he undertook. He felt the neglect, however, very keenly. One day he wrote to Lucas: 'Bring me another large *Castle*, or two, or three, for it is mighty fine . . . . . everybody likes it.

But I should recollect that none but friends see my things; I have no doubt the world despises them.' A little later, the feeling of discouragement determines the painter (who was his own publisher) to limit the extent of his venture to the work already begun. 'My plan is to confine the number of plates to those now on hand; I see we have about twenty. . . . It harasses my days, and disturbs my rest at nights. The expense is too enormous for a work that has nothing but your beautiful feeling and execution to recommend it. *The painter himself is totally unpopular, and ever will be on this side the grave; the subjects nothing but the art, and the buyers wholly ignorant of that.* . . . I want to relieve my mind of that which harasses it like a disease.' This is not a happy state of feeling for an artist towards the close of his career, who knows that he has completely expressed himself, and that his utmost skill has failed to awaken any general interest in the public. Constable was heartily appreciated by a few friends, such as Leslie and Fisher, and a few others, and his pictures had been understood in France by the younger artists of the day; but he had not touched the public in his own country, and knew that he 'could never be popular on this side the grave.' In 1832 he wrote, 'My limited and abstracted art is to be found under every hedge and in every lane, and therefore nobody thinks it worth picking up; but I have my admirers, each of whom I consider a host.' Sometimes, in moments of depression, the want of popularity was felt more keenly. 'Every gleam of sunshine is withdrawn from me, in the art at least. Can it be wondered at, then, that I paint continual storms?' However the sturdy, self-reliant independence of vulgar opinion, remained with him to the last. He knew the value of his own work and had a proper contempt for the judgment of the ignorant. 'Mr. ——, an admirer of commonplace, called to see my picture, and did not like it at all, *so I am sure there is something good in it.*' In another letter he says, 'I have lately painted a heath that I prefer to any of my former efforts; it is about two feet six, painted for a very old friend, an amateur, who well knows how to appreciate it, *for I cannot paint down to ignorance.*' In the year 1825 he wrote, 'My *Lock* is now on my easel; it is silvery, windy, and delicious; all health, and the absence of everything stagnant, and is wonderfully got together: the print will be fine.' Happily for Constable, he was sustained in his labour by the certain knowledge that his work was good in its own kind; that knowledge which is the truest and best consolation, often indeed the only consolation, of those who are endowed with the isolating gift of originality.

He had not looked forward to a happy old age, but he did not attain old age. He died on the 31st of March, 1837, in his 61st year, and suddenly, from the effects of indigestion, there being no disease (as was afterwards ascertained by a post-mortem examination) sufficient to account for the accident. The day before his death Constable had been busy finishing a picture of *Arundel Mill and Castle*, one of his best and brightest works, which clearly proves that there could have been no mental decadence. A painfully remarkable coincidence is noticed by Mr. Leslie, which has almost the character of a presentiment of approaching death. In his very last letter of invitation to his attached friend the landscape-painter writes, 'Prithee come, "*life is short, friendship is sweet;*" these were the last words of poor Fisher to me in his last invitation.' And so Constable quoted them in *his* last invitation.

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The life that we have just been studying, though not very rich either in incident or in variety of feeling, must ever retain a deep interest of a peculiar kind. Constable was a discoverer in art, and, like every innovator, had to wait long for any public recognition. Even at the time of his death his reputation was as nothing in comparison with what it is to-day; and unless he had attained the utmost limits of human longevity he could never have taken, as a living artist, that place which now belongs to him as a name in the history of painting. Was he a great artist? I see that Mr. Wilson, in giving the *Bay of Weymouth* to the Louvre, calls the author of that picture 'the greatest of English landscape-painters,' but this is the exaggeration of a worshipper. The rank of Constable may be ascertained by examination of his claims, but it cannot be settled by what amounts simply to the statement of a strong preference, as in Mr. Wilson's case, or an equally decided repugnance, as in the case of Mr. Ruskin. The qualities which mark true *greatness* in the fine arts are high imaginative power in combination with splendid executive accomplishment, and they always include a strong sense of the sublime in nature. Now it would be unjust to affirm that Constable was entirely destitute of the imaginative faculty, for there is considerable originality of invention in the use of his materials; but in the whole range of his works which are known to me there certainly does not occur one single instance, either of that noble imagination which elevates the mind of the spectator to the exalted region of sublimity, or of that deeply and tenderly sympathetic imagination which can plunge us in melancholy reverie and moisten our eyes with tears. Leslie said that the art of Constable gave him 'a great delight, a delight distinct from, and he almost thought superior to, that which he received from any other pictures whatever;' and when Leslie said this we may be sure that he felt it, and that it was not any temporary feeling, but a feeling which had formed a part, and an essential part, of his own æsthetic experience. But the secret of this delight may be expressed in a single word,—*refreshment.* Leslie was himself continually occupied with a kind of study which impelled him, by an inevitable reaction, to seek refreshment in pastorals; and as he had the keenest appreciation of the genuine, the pastorals of Constable delighted him, as being the most genuine of pastorals. The life which Leslie constantly studied in drawing-rooms and in the theatre was a refined and artificial existence, and he went from this to the landscape world of Constable as a Londoner goes out into the country, finding everything there which was not to be found in the polished society that he painted, and in the inventions of tailors, milliners, architects, and gardeners, with which that society was clothed, and sheltered, and surrounded. Constable had the strongest dislike to all the things that Leslie habitually worked with; he said that the great world was not made for him, nor he for it, and that a gentleman's park was his aversion. He was rustic to the heart, a Suffolk miller, knowing rural things down to the minutest detail, and loving them with an intense, a concentrated, and an exclusive affection. And of all pictures that ever were painted, Constable's pictures are the most thoroughly and purely rural. He painted the crops and the weather, and windmills that would turn round, and watermills that could be tenanted, and canals with locks and barges that were good for their rough service. Even in his very manner of work, so utterly original that there is no precedent for it in any former style of painting, there was a strange and profound harmony with the rusticity of the painter's heart. It may be rude and empirical, as if some farmer endowed with genius had got palette and brushes, and set to work by the light of nature and inspiration, but it is always perfectly clear from the one vice which is most out of harmony with rural feeling, for at least it is never superfine. These pastorals are not the pastorals of Florian, but are redolent of the genuine English country, with its fresh spring verdure, its gusty winds, its frequent showers, its flying shadows, and foliage restlessly glittering.

The influence of Constable in the history of landscape may be found ultimately to be one of the most widely traceable and one of the most enduring of all such personal influences. He is the father of modern French landscape, which in its turn affects more or less decidedly the practice of every other nation. Indeed, although Turner has been a great deal more engraved than Constable, and much more talked about, and although Turner's life-work contains a thousand times the quantity of suggestive ideas that Constable's does, still it may be found ultimately that Constable has a greater effect upon practical landscape-painting. No influence could be healthier than his. He saw the kind of landscape which Nature had formed him to appreciate, with the originality of perception which belongs to genuine feeling alone, and he brought the art of painting much more into harmony with certain aspects of natural landscape—common aspects, but not the less worth painting on that account—than it had ever been before his novel and rather perilous experiments. No one who has reflected upon the nature of artistic discovery will suspect me of any desire to detract from the honour which is due to Constable, if I venture to express the opinion that the best effects of his innovations have not been displayed so much in his own works as in those of some subsequent artists, who have profited by his originality and courage, and worked out in tranquillity the problems that he suggested. His greatest merit is to have so clearly perceived that landscape was not simple in its texture, like surfaces of ebony or marble, but had a spotted complexity quite peculiar to itself, in which there was an endless variety of colour and a moving play of light. His trees are never conventional in any way, though he painted at a time when conventionalism in foliage was established in great authority.

It is a mistake to suppose, as Mr. Ruskin supposed, that Constable had an entire contempt for the works of others because he dreaded the effects of a National Gallery, and did not, in his own painting, adopt the manner of any of his predecessors. The truth is, that Constable had a degree of reverence for those who were reputed to be great masters in landscape, which curiously contrasts with the avowed heresy of the author of 'Modern Painters.' He studied Claude whenever he could, and copied him very industriously, always with the most profound respect. Constable believed that the famous landscape-painters of the seventeenth century were men to be held in high honour, but only imitated in their habits of reference to nature. Indeed, to most artists of the present day, Constable's respect for classical landscape would appear rather excessive, and few now living would share it unreservedly. Notwithstanding his originality, his mind was in many respects a traditional and not a sceptical mind. It was strongly imbued with the traditions of religion and patriotism; it was at the same time imbued with the traditions of art. But he had that practical independence which is compatible with respect for what has been done by others, and quite distinct from the narrowness of obstinacy or the stupidity of unteachableness. So far from resisting the teaching of Claude and Poussin, he sought it with reverent labour; but in the presence of Nature he made no conscious reference to picture-galleries, willingly, indeed, forgetting them, yet retaining the general effects of the education he had gathered there. It may fairly be added, in defence of Constable, that, so far from going to nature in a spirit of unteachableness, he went there in the hope and belief that, if his mind were but sufficiently humble and observant, God would reveal to him something both beautiful and new. Indeed, the whole temper and character of Constable were admirable for their combination of unshakable self-reliance with the heartiest respect for merit in other men. He was not entirely free from certain acerbities, which are the natural and almost inevitable consequence of giving one's best energies to a pursuit which few are qualified to appreciate; but it is agreeable to remember, that though he never knew the sweets of popularity, he enjoyed for many years what is far better worth having—the entire devotion of a high-minded and admirable woman, and the life-long friendship of two or three earnest and cultivated men.

P. G. HAMERTON.

PORTRAIT OF ANDREA DEL SARTO.

THIS lithograph may be acceptable to many of our readers who know the National Gallery, and to some others who either have not visited it or remember it imperfectly, as a translation, faithful so far as the limited art permits, of one of the most interesting portraits in that collection. Almost every painter of the figure has preserved for posterity some record of his own features, and this great Florentine artist has left us one of the liveliest of such essays in self-portraiture. It is impossible to look at it without speculating on the strength and weakness of a nature remarkable both for weakness and for strength; a nature so robust that the difficulties of art were a mere play for it from the beginning, and yet so weak in will that a woman ruled it absolutely and degraded it from honour. Andrew the Tailor's son had everything in his favour except energy to resist his beautiful evil-spirited wife, and at the very height of his success and prosperity returned at her command from the court of King Francis to resume his yoke of slavery, breaking afterwards the most solemn engagements towards the King, and dishonourably wasting the money with which the royal confidence had entrusted him for the purchase of artistic treasures. Is there anything in the face to explain this union of splendid artistic faculty with incapacity for resistance in the character? When we know the history beforehand we may discover, or fancy that we discover, such possibilities, but without this previous knowledge it is not likely that any physiognomist would see more in the face than the pure artistic temperament, which is clearly apparent both in the expression of the eyes and in the bearing of the noble head.

THE THREE CATHEDRALS DEDICATED TO ST. PAUL.*

SECOND NOTICE.

STRICTLY speaking, the last notice contained what we have to say about 'The Three Cathedrals dedicated to St. Paul,' and we have now to speak of the prospects of a fourth cathedral with which we are threatened. For if the sweeping alterations proposed by the Committee are carried out—if the 'magnificence which has been conceived' is thoroughly realised—the future St. Paul's may indeed, in the opinion of many, be a far more complete and striking building than that which we have at present, but will certainly be anything else but Wren's Cathedral. But before discussing future possibilities we must first take up the history of the building where we dropped it, and briefly relate what Wren intended and what has actually been done up to the present time.

The materials from which we might hope to gather the intentions of the architect for completing and adorning his masterpiece are very scant and equally vague. We learn from the 'Parentalia' that it was his wish to decorate the dome with mosaic, after the manner of that of St. Peter's in Rome, but that his intentions were frustrated by the ignorance of the public—such a method of decoration being unknown in England—and also by the fear of expense. Further, a drawing, reproduced by Mr. Longman, is found in the Gardner collection, which shows the pendentives of the dome filled with designs not dissimilar in character of outline to the four which at present exist; and Mr. Longman concludes from the date of the drawing, that it probably represents Wren's own ideas. The surface materials of these pendentives too is found to be a stone softer than the Portland stone generally used, and this fact seems a further confirmation of the theory that it was Wren's intention to adorn these features,—whether by painting, mosaic or bas-relief, cannot even be conjectured. We know further that he had designed a baldachino 'with wreathed pillars of the richest Greek marbles, supporting a canopy hemispherical,' of which a somewhat mutilated model is still in existence. Besides this, the poor decoration of the apse originated, we regret to say, with Wren, though it was intended to serve only a temporary purpose. These few scanty hints are all that survive to us of the architect's intentions, and appear to us to be a marvellously inadequate foundation for the vast superstructure of suggestions which claim to be attempts 'to carry out Wren's ideas.' It is worth remarking too that even had the suggestions been more ample, it would still be more than doubtful whether their execution would have improved the building. It should be borne in mind, in view of this question, that Wren's connexion with architecture had a scientific rather than an artistic origin. Whether the true basis of architectural art is or is not scientific construction, is too large a question to discuss here; but to architecture so originating decoration is only the ultimate and final superstructure, which, though an important and integral part of the whole art, will not be mastered by more than a very few. Moreover, such waifs and strays of decorative art as we find in Wren's work lead us to believe, that though his own decoration of his own building might have been trusted to preserve intact his most valued architectural effects, the mannerisms and conventionalities of the period would have been so persistent that we need feel little regret that his work stopped at its present point of completion.

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* A History of the Three Cathedrals dedicated to St. Paul in London, with reference chiefly to their Structure and Architecture, and the Sources whence the necessary Funds were derived. By William Longman, F.S.A. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1873.

So much for Wren's intentions. The next effort towards decoration was made by the Royal Academy of Arts. It had been proposed at one of the meetings that the interior of Somerset House Chapel should be decorated, with a view of convincing the public of the advantage of thus decorating churches. Sir Joshua Reynolds suggested 'that, instead of the chapel, they should fly at higher game and undertake St. Paul's Cathedral.' It is not known whether such decoration was intended to take the form of wall-paintings or of pictures hung against the wall. The artists who were to carry out the work were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kaufmann. The scheme, however, came to nothing, in consequence of the opposition of the trustees, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.

This took place in 1773. For three quarters of a century nothing more was done. In 1853 Thornhill's paintings were restored by Mr. Parris. This brings us within the period of personal recollections. At this time the Cathedral was nearly as Wren had left it, but for the acquisition of much dinginess. The organ then stood upon the original screen between the westernmost arches of the choir, and was supported by columns which formed a continuous foundation down to the soil below the crypt. This position was most valuable, both musically and architecturally. Musically, the position and conditions of the foundation gave the instrument a *timbre* of unrivalled beauty, which those who heard and appreciated it will never forget; architecturally, it not only concealed the poverty of the apse which we have spoken of above, but further gave a sense of indefinite extent and mystery to the choir, which most favourably contrasted with the harsh abruptness of the present eastern vista.

In 1858 an important move was made towards the utilisation of the dome for service, which we need only consider here so far as it affected the artistic conditions of the building. Had the proposal never been made, the building would have remained in a condition which was fairly satisfactory from an æsthetic, and wholly satisfactory from an archæological point of view. Had the new necessities been made the one motive of the further development of the building, the present problem would have been satisfactorily solved. As it is, while the Cathedral has for some fifteen years been subjected to restless disturbance and its effect marred by an unbroken course of unsuccessful experiment and utilitarian contrivance, the obvious safety-valve for indiscreet public zeal which the dome services would have afforded seems likely to avail nothing, and the mutilation of fifteen years' duration is to prove merely a prelude to a permanent change of identity.

But to return to the history. The first symptoms of a change from the sleepy spirit of the past, to which, however morally and religiously culpable, we nevertheless owe what few uninjured links with antiquity we still retain, were shown in the development of a spirit of locomotion in the cathedral furniture. The organ, evincing an incessant impulse, unlike its poor relation of the barrel, to 'move on,' first quitted its original position on the screen, thus losing for ever its unrivalled quality of tone, and found temporary resting-place in a southeasterly arch of the choir, and has since then removed again, subdivided itself, &c., until to the occasional visitor it has become a source of intense, and constant, though not wholly pleasurable, excitement to conjecture on each fresh visit in what quarter it will be found, through what arch it will peep at him. On our last visit the organ appeared subdivided and set against the solid eastern supports of the dome, while, to establish a connexion between the subdivisions, the floor of the choir had been bodily raised. Since it is, as we think, a very generally received opinion that two of the leading defects of the design of the Cathedral are the insufficiency of span in the four main arches of the dome, and the depression of the window-heads of the apse, it might have been supposed to be sufficiently obvious that no arrangement could more thoroughly emphasise existing faults than the further narrowing and consequent heightening of the eastern arch. Experience fully confirms this opinion and leaves us to hope that the locomotive spirit in the instrument may prove not even yet to have been exhausted. Then the choir-screen, after removal from its original position, reappeared in various degrees of completeness and in different positions. The choir-stalls underwent manifold mutilations and transpositions. Finally, the altar has advanced into the centre of the choir, bedizened by hangings of a fearful and wonderful colour and design. For decoration, what few attempts have been made have been for the most part poor in conception and incongruous in effect. After the renovation of Thornhill's paintings in the dome, one of the earliest experiments was the painting and gilding of the soffits of the dome arches. This experiment, though in itself a tolerable specimen of the decorative trade of the present cultivated era, could nevertheless scarcely have been expected to have any other effect than to make the rest of the Cathedral look dirty. Next in order, if our memory serves us, was the decoration of two pendentives of the dome with mosaic designs by Messrs. G. F. Watts and Stevens. These had, as we have seen, the advantage of the possibility of the suspicion of a suggestion from Wren himself. As designs they are among the noblest works of modern times, as decorative aids to the building they are inconceivably injurious. The introduction of Munich glass into a number of the windows and the application to them of soap, employed, not as we should have wished, as a detergent, and the lining of a cupola of the choir with mosaic of an unpleasant and sickly hue, terminate the list of improvements up to the present date.

During the era of experiments, the results of which we have briefly noticed, and while more sweeping changes were under discussion, many persons interested in the proper treatment of the building came forward with suggestions, some few of which it will be worth our while to notice: first however remarking that the leading idea, whether consciously or unconsciously held, seems to have been, to provide a safety-valve for indiscreet public zeal. The experience of professional architects who love the past; the knowledge of the great difficulties in which they are frequently placed by the fervent desire of the public that 'old things shall become new;' the adequate realisation of the gain to us involved in the neglect of centuries and of the inestimable risk of 'restoration,' led necessarily to such a result. Meanwhile, it is with sincere pleasure that we note how thoroughly the Surveyor of the building has fulfilled what we consider to have been his proper functions. Honour to whom honour is due! Whether or not consciously realising the essential duties of his position, certain it is that, in view of the fact that much money which had to be spent has been got rid of with wonderfully little permanent modification of the fabric, the Surveyor has proved an inestimable servant to the vital interests of the Cathedral, and of art generally. Adventitious features have appeared and have disappeared; the decoration, no doubt, will in some measure take its departure; the only incongruous feature which has an air of permanency is the classical tank from which the dome sermons are delivered, and this too perhaps is threatened by impending ruin, aptly symbolised by the imminent segment of a metallic sphere. Meanwhile, Mr. Longman might perhaps tell us how much indiscreet public zeal in a pecuniary form has been safely and permanently worked off. To return to the schemes suggested by others: Mr. Street, whose well-known and almost exclusive devotion to Gothic architecture would certainly not have pointed him out as an advocate for conservatism towards St. Paul's, published in 1871 a small and valuable pamphlet, suggesting the proper method of improving the Cathedral. Showing, in the first instance, that it is absurd to talk of carrying out the intentions of the architect at the present time, that to introduce polychromatic decoration which was certainly not originally contemplated, is to alter the very essential elements of effect and to change the very identity of the building, he proposed that the dome services should be made the motive of further additions; that in place of the present temporary and vulgar fittings, proper and magnificent ritual arrangements should be introduced into the dome, and that the pavement should be replaced by something more ornamental; that otherwise the structure should be allowed to retain its integrity.

Messrs. Micklethwaite and Somers Clarke published in the 'Sacristy' of February 1, 1871, a paper containing proposals for a somewhat similar scheme carried into further detail. Taking advantage of the fact that Wren's choir did not extend so far west as the eastern arch of the dome, they found in the space between the solid piers supporting the eastern arch a suitable recess for a baldachin, and planned a choir of considerable size projecting into the dome, terminated at each angle by an ambo after the Basilican type. The plan in detail is well worth consulting.

That some such scheme was worthy of consideration is certain; that it might have been made to exhaust all the funds which the public were disposed to subscribe to what they are pleased to call their Metropolitan Cathedral is probable; meanwhile the illness and recovery of the Heir-Apparent gave an additional impetus to public zeal, and perhaps the time for safety-valves is passed. But having found more to say than we anticipated about the history of the Cathedral from Wren's time till the auspicious event above alluded to, we must reserve its future prospects for a third number.

BASIL CHAMPNEYS.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.*

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR winter in the Val Ste. Véronique had been hitherto one of those mild southern winters which deceive us with promises of a calm transition from the glow of autumn to the green of spring, as if there were nothing between the two seasons but an interval of greyer sky and briefer daylight, without any severity of temperature, or any white enshrouding of the departed year. Rarely, however, does the course of nature in these latitudes entirely avoid the season of arctic sleep, and if it is delayed till the spring flowers are ready to blossom, it is almost sure to come down suddenly upon the earth, like a fit of somnolence on a weary human frame. So it happened that one day near the end of February the thermometer went down very rapidly, and every creature that was susceptible of cold began to feel the bracing of a keener air. It was evident that we were to have real winter after all, though probably a very brief one.

It came upon us in a single night, and as men have gone to rest with hair all black or brown, and the next morning looked in the glass and seen a head white like the foam of the sea, so did our forest darken in the twilight and whiten in next day's dawn.

It is certainly not my intention to trouble the reader much with mere changes of the weather, but I mention this because it produced one of those enchantments which belong to sylvan scenery, and to sylvan scenery alone. The beauty of hoar-frost is nothing by itself, nothing on naked rock or mountain, nothing in the streets of the city, and out at sea it is visible only on the ship's cordage, if by accident it may whiten it for awhile. But on sylvan landscape it settles like a fairy decoration. No human work is delicate enough to be compared with such delicacy as this, no human artificer in silver or in ivory ever wrought such visible magic as these millions of tiny spears that thrust out points of unimaginable fineness from the lightest spray's utmost extremity. The perfect beauty of this adornment is visible only on tree-branches, and most visible on the thinnest and lightest; on the dark thin twigs of the birch, that bend under the weight of a robin, or on the slender long sprays of the bird-cherry tree, that the little birds love so well. And it is not every lover of nature, however keen his perception, however inveterate his habit of observation, who has had the good fortune, even once in his whole existence, to see the hoar-frost in perfection. It needs a calm so perfect that a ship with all her sails would sleep motionless upon the sea; it needs also a low cloud upon the earth, whose watery particles, or hollow spheres, or whatever in their infinite littleness they may be, may fall and settle slowly in the stillness of the night, and freeze and fasten on the tiniest point they touch. Not once in a dozen winters does this fairy building prosper to its completion; but when the time is come, and the fairies are permitted to do their work without any disturbance from the great, strong gods of the tempest, or the rays of far-darting Apollo, then a strange enchantment descends upon the forest, and a fragile beauty clothes it; so fragile that the alighting of a bird will shatter it, or the wind from his rapid wings.

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* It happens that the illustrations that appear with this number do not precisely belong to the chapters which are printed now, or at least this is more especially true of one of them. Our contributor, M. Greux, could not let us have his plate in time, so I have inserted instead of it a second plate of my own, which had been intended for a later issue.

The hoar-frost lasted for one day in this perfect beauty, as abundant as a considerable snowfall, but incomparably more exquisite, being indeed to the opacity of common snow what the lace of a princess is to the linen of ordinary life. During this one day of strange tranquillity I walked mile after mile in the narrow woodland roads, deeply enjoying the solemnity of their silence, and watching without sorrow the beautiful death of nature. The next night came a storm of wind and rain that washed out all fairyland ruthlessly, and after the rain came snow, and when the snow was deep in the meadows down in the valley the sky cleared and the stars shone as night deepened with that peculiar scintillating splendour which belongs to a frosty night, and a young bright moon cast a broad shadow from the wood's edge down a slope of snow untrodden by man or beast.

Alexis and I were watching this scene from a terrace in the garden, when he seized my arm suddenly, and pointed in silence to the broad shadow above-mentioned, in which we discovered, with some difficulty, several slowly-moving objects, that seemed to be emerging from the blackness of the wood. They came out into the moonlight, half-a-dozen of them, all fine wild boars, and Alexis was just going to fetch his rifle when a shot was fired from the wood on the opposite side of the valley, and the largest boar rolled over on the snow. The others were lost immediately in the recesses of the forest.

Soon a dark human figure became visible as it crossed the narrow open space before us. We quitted our post of observation, and went towards the boar as quickly as the depth of the snow would let us. It was a noble beast, weighing more than three hundred pounds; and the successful *chasseur*, perceiving that his exploit had not been without witnesses, made no attempt to avoid us, but came up with perfect assurance. It was our new acquaintance, the Weasel, and he saluted us with an ease of manner like that of some considerable landowner, who finds himself by accident a trespasser on his neighbour's domain. He begged pardon for having yielded to an irresistible temptation, and said that he would ask of my generosity a pound or two of boar's flesh for himself. I had resolved before to keep on good terms with this active and enterprising neighbour, whose depredations it was impossible to prevent; so, instead of wasting words in ineffectual anger, I simply observed that he would have done better to ask my permission, which would have been freely given, and added that he might remove the beast whenever he chose to fetch it.

He stayed at the farm that night, and the boar was carried on a rough litter to the house, where the Weasel performed the office of butcher with a degree of skill that gave clear evidence that the task was not new to his experience. The next day I came to a decision, and offered to take him into my employment as a gamekeeper; which he agreed to more readily than I had expected, for his independent existence must have been in many respects more agreeable to his tastes and habits, and probably more lucrative also, though it was likely enough that he would never entirely abandon his private business as a *braconnier*, even after his engagement in my service. I did not regret this decision afterwards, for the Weasel was of the greatest use to us in subsequent sylvan labours and explorations. He occupied a vacant cottage in the Val Ste. Véronique, and attached himself more particularly to the service of my son. I was glad that Alexis, who wandered a great deal in the forest from the beginning, should have such a competent servant and guide.

The short winter was severe enough whilst it lasted, and we had a week of intense frost, at the end of which all the ponds carried. The Weasel guided Alexis to a small natural lake at a distance of eight or nine miles from our valley, where we skated before the thaw came. The lake was about a mile long, and half as broad, and in shape was a miniature copy of the inland sea at Geneva. It was surrounded by precipitous little hills, and at one end of it a cliff of granite rose straight out of the water to the height of two hundred feet. The granite re-appeared farther up the hill in a second precipice, the two cliffs being like the walls of the aisle and clerestory of a Gothic church, whilst the slope of the roof between them was represented by a declivity clothed with an impenetrable copsewood. On the highest summit were the remains of a feudal castle, two or three towers perched on the top of the crag, of which one only remained in a tolerable state of preservation, the others being almost indistinguishable from the rocks on which they stood, or out of which they seemed rather to have grown by some ordinary development of nature.

All round this beautiful basin the forest pressed towards the water, the trees bending over the edge as if they wondered whether it might not be possible to advance still farther into the crystal depths. The water itself was of the most limpid purity, and the ice so perfect that we skated on it as a fly walks on glass-cases in a museum, seeing clearly all the curious things below. Towards the middle of the lake there was nothing but a green abyss, whose colour, as of a thick dark emerald, we knew to be the sign of liquid deeps too far below us to be fathomed by any gazing, and the surface was in appearance indistinguishable from the calmest water, all the trees upon the shores being reflected in it as if on some calm day in summer, except that they were leafless.

I had the curiosity to explore the feudal remains on the crag, and found two little vaulted rooms in the chief tower which might be easily rendered habitable for a night. I afterwards obtained permission to arrange this place as a *pied-à-terre*, and put glass in the loopholes, and doors in the doorways, and a little rough furniture in the rude apartments, whose walls I hung with a remnant of old tapestry that we discovered at the Val Ste. Véronique. After this, the tower became a centre of fresh journeys and explorations, but the first impression of it remained with me to the end, and I never forgot the beauty of that calm winter's day when the lake was smooth and hard, and we skated during the sunshine of the brief afternoon, till the basin lay in shadow from shore to shore and it was time to journey homewards 'in the deepening of the night.'

I am old enough to have learned by this time that the profound pleasure we may derive from natural scenery is dependent entirely upon impression, and that the causes of the impression are most complex, both within our own being and without. That little lake in the forest certainly gave me one of the most complete and ineffaceable of such impressions that I ever received in a life of many wanderings. I had heard of the place vaguely for years, but never before visited it, although it was accessible enough by the forest-tracks from my own Val Ste. Véronique. Possibly my imagination may have unconsciously laboured upon it as a theme, and prepared me for a keener enjoyment of the reality. I certainly had dreamed of the little lake, and that I came upon it with all my boys when we were hunting, but my dream was not to be realised in any way. Returning homeward with Alexis in the frosty moonlight I amused myself by speculating on the question why this little lakelet, so inferior in every respect to the lakes I had seen abroad, had so immediately gained a hold upon my landscape-sentiment which Lucerne herself had failed to gain. I think the reason must have been partly in the way we went to the place. We had gone on foot through the forest, and the Weasel led the way with a pony charged with our overcoats and provisions. For two or three hours we caught scarcely a single glimpse of anything but the dense copsewood close at hand, so that we were prepared to enjoy any open scene that approached to the nature of a pictorial composition; and the scene at last, when we did come to it, had a charm which the delicate landscape-sentiment intensely appreciates, that of seeming to belong quite absolutely and entirely to the spectator. The place, too, had the most harmonious unity, not being spoiled by buildings; whilst on the other hand it had not the vacancy that is caused by the absence of all human association, for the crumbling towers on the crag suggested the romance and poetry of the past. Be this as it may, it won my affections immediately, and I looked forward with a degree of pleasure, which a month before I should have believed myself incapable of feeling in anything, to the coming of the warmer weather, when my boy and I might often renew our visits to the solitudes in which it lay hidden like a diamond lost in the jungle.

Although winter had come upon us late, the severity of it was enough to make amends for its want of punctuality. A tremendous snow-storm confined us to the Val Ste. Véronique; all the roads were impassable, and the house was isolated from the world. But what do we know of winter, what can any one know of it, in the latitudes of the chestnut and the vine? Even where the oak will not grow freely the winters are still supportable, and wherever the yet hardier pine-tree can bear the rigours of the long dark nights man lives through the months of gloom, in crowded Lapland huts. The perfect winter, more horrible than any dream of poetry except Dante's frozen hell, is the winter of Spitzbergen, where indeed some timber may be found, but only driftwood, washed by the surf of the Atlantic on that treeless northern shore, or fragments of hapless vessels crushed long ago like nutshells in the ice.

I suppose that every European who has written anything about winter has certainly alluded to the one indisputable benefit which that season brings to us, in inclining us to be more studious of books. We never read so profitably, I think, as we do by the fireside on a winter's evening; and if in a future state of existence there should be any hours that we have passed in this world to which we may look back with feelings of tenderness and regret, it would be those fireside hours in which our minds have sought a light that is not the sun's light, and which comes to us through literature.

Amongst other readings that seemed more particularly adapted to the season, I had selected passages of English poets who had described winter with great earnestness of manner, though not always with equal felicity of style. It is not easy, in the blank verse of Cowper, to find a passage that may be quoted without the wish to pass over some line that is either halting or prosaic, or else that slips away too suddenly from under you; but there is one—the description of that famous freak of the Empress Catherine, the ice-palace on the shore of the Neva—which is firm and sound throughout, and very grand. The subject is introduced by a few weak and prosaic verses, which injure the effect in the original, but when the nobler lines are detached from these the ore is pure indeed:—

'No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:
In such a palace Poetry might place
The armoury of Winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,

Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined: nor other cement asked
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side; a watery light
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.'

Surely these lines have qualities which will survive the vicissitudes of taste; but we are so impeded in our judgment of the poets by the fashions of two epochs, by their fashions and our fashions, that it is almost impossible for us to arrive at an unprejudiced appreciation of their work. And I think that no poets are farther removed from ourselves than those of the eighteenth century. There is Thomson, for instance; how difficult it is to read him without being arrested at every page by a too clear perception of the minor tricks or *ficelles* of his craft! At the time he wrote, these were the accepted and customary *ficelles*, and probably attracted so little attention in themselves that the mind of the reader was left perfectly free to enjoy the thoughts and imagery of the poet; but to us the work is old-fashioned, and strikes us as we are struck by whatever is just old-fashioned enough to be *passé de mode.* And yet, although his descriptions are not treated on the same principles as ours, although he has not learned the more temperate and perfect art which has resulted from a completer culture than the culture of his time, and has not been aided (as contemporary work is aided) by the development of the modern school in painting, there is still great force in his most finished passages. The episode of the man lost in the snow is one of the best of these:—

'As thus the snows arise; and foul and fierce
All Winter drives along the darkened air;
In his own loose-revolving fields, the swain
Disastered stands: sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown, joyless brow; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain;
Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
Beneath the formless wild; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray;
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts of home
Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt.

* * * *

In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife nor children, more shall he behold;
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly Winter seizes; shuts up sense;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffened corse!
Stretched out and bleaching in the northern blast.'

P. G. Hamerton.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XXI.—R. S. CHATTOCK.

'*When rosy plumelets tuft the larch.*'

IN the seventeenth number of the PORTFOLIO we published a small etching by Mr. Chattock, and afterwards a more important one in our thirtieth number. Few etchers have made more decided progress than Mr. Chattock during the last few years. His work is now both firmer in drawing and much richer in tone and local colour than it used to be; indeed, it is already very full and strong, and the artist seems to have entirely overcome the great difficulty of biting, which might be called the *pons asinorum* of etchers, were it not that an artist may be retarded by it who is still of nobler race than any *asinus*. Of late Mr. Chattock's favourite subjects appear to have been woods in winter, and he renders them with steadily increasing skill, this steady advance being a more hopeful sign than etchers generally perceive for their encouragement. I have seen a good deal of the etching movement which has been going forward during the last twelve or fifteen years, and have been especially struck by one thing, namely, that some etchers made no progress at all, but went on etching as badly as ever notwithstanding great study and patience; whilst others occasionally did things which seemed proofs of an extraordinary advance, but the advance was not to be relied upon, and after executing some particularly clever plate they would produce others which ought to have been still better, if mere practice could always improve us, but which turned out to be as deficient in everything that constitutes good work as their earlier and less experienced performances. No one knows how subtle an art this is, and how failure awaits us where we expect it least. The surest way to avoid it appears to be not to rest satisfied with anything short of a thorough mastery in biting, for, as Constable used to say, the tone of a picture is what strikes the spectator first, and if a plate has been properly bitten it has that in its favour. Sound biting is not all, but it is much. It cannot give significance of line, but it can do very much for strength of shade; and in these days, with our improved chemistry and appliances, the art of biting (though still difficult) is not quite so hazardous as it used to be.

Now that Mr. Chattock has acquired a good deal of executive certainty, I would suggest the more frequent employment of his art on natural themes of beauty. I think that there is something northern and rugged in his feeling which is somewhat opposed to the artistic sentiment, and which we of northern race have to contend against when we enter the realm of art. The southern races are not so often retarded by this obstacle, and therefore they are more naturally and easily artistic. Our intense affection for nature, often for very rude nature, inclines us to a passionate study of facts, but makes us rather insensible to beautiful order and arrangement. I think that we northern men may come to art at last through culture, so that our pursuit of art is not altogether hopeless or vain, and yet that we are hampered by our constitution, which has such strong affinities for truth, even rude truth, and such comparatively weak affinities for beauty and for grace.

P. G. HAMERTON.

THE CASTELLANI COLLECTION.

THE purchase of the second portion of the Castellani collection reflects credit alike upon the Trustees of the British Museum who recommended it and on the Government by whom it was made. This treasure is the latest of that long series which we owe primarily to the learning, judgment, taste, and energy, of the present Keeper of the Greek and Roman Antiquities. There can be but one voice as to its worth, and the nation can well afford the price it has paid for a priceless collection. To estimate its market value could have been no easy task, for the objects comprised in it are unusually miscellaneous; and if they include a few which have their parallels in foreign museums, they also present some the congeners of which are neither to be found now, nor hopefully looked for hereafter, and it was upon these last that a valuation really depended. To attempt with the space at command to handle so various a collection in detail, would be to reduce this paper to a mere catalogue; and it will be better, for the present at least, to dwell upon but a few of the more important objects.

The presiding divinity of the whole is the large bronze female head, which in every way marks an epoch in the annals of discovery. A work of almost purely artistic worth, it may be contemplated apart from archæological questions. It was found in Greece, and, as we are told, in Thessaly, and evidently once belonged to an entire figure, which with nearly equal certainty represented a Greek deity. Standing before this head, one finds that difficulty in coming to a calm analysis which is ever felt in presence of Nature in her grandest aspects and Art in her noblest works. Then criticism seems irrelevant, and praise itself becomes an impertinence. Yet no sooner have we left this presence than we are beset by the desire to account to ourselves for the manner in which we have been moved. In turning away from this head we are above all things conscious that our sympathies have been excited. We have been confronted by no cold ideal or mere abstraction. Rather were our emotions most akin to those aroused by Da Vinci's semi-divine types of womanhood. The same blood that courses through our own veins seemed to flow there too, though in a purer stream; and in an humble but impassioned sense of fellowship we had become forgetful of the artist's skill. There can be little hesitation in assuming that this head, as a work in bronze, stands quite peerless amongst the treasures of Hellenic art at present extant. There are but two or three busts in the hitherto unequalled collection of bronzes at Naples which will bear any comparison with it in point of workmanship and character; while in regard of interest, and of a beauty appealing to all bosoms, the palm must at once be awarded to ours. A model of noble womanhood, instinct with the divine breath, of consummate dignity, and majesty, and unspeakable tenderness. Its animation is startling, in spite of the empty sockets of the eyes, from which the enamel that once filled them has long since disappeared. The parted lips seem to emit breath and utter speech: their chiselling is superb, and amongst the antique heads existing we shall look in vain for such another mouth. If the dubious conjecture that our bronze represents Aphrodite be well founded, we have here a goddess as far surpassing her of Milo as she in her turn surpasses the very terrestrial divinity of the Tribune at Florence.

A careful comparison of this fine fragment with known works, and with the notices which have come down to us of the style and the aims of Greek sculptors and schools of art, would warrant us in assigning it to a period before or at the rise of that school which is known as the Later Athenian. If we fail to find in it all that severity which characterised the works of Phidias, and probably of his immediate followers, it is equally devoid of that tendency to softness, sensuousness, and perhaps it might be said *comparative* smallness, which were almost inseparable from the 'pathos' of Scopas and Praxiteles. Here, indeed, the severest criticism can find no more marked deviation from the greater types of form than that the chin is less pronounced, and, so to say, less square than we should look to find it in works of an earlier period. The largeness of drawing in the general outlines, in the brow, the cheeks, the eyes, the nose, and the mouth, suffers nothing in comparison with that which distinguishes the rare fragments of the greater time which have been spared to us. Consider the extreme beauty of the brow and temples, and the subtle delicacy of the line of the profile, from the roots of the hair to the joining of the nose with the upper lip! Here is no rigid right-line extending from the top of the forehead to the termination of the nose, that pseudo-Greek characteristic so long regarded in modern art as the true ideal form, but whose prototype was only to be found, if anywhere, in common-place productions of the Roman time. On the contrary, the conditions of nature are observed with absolute truth, guided by the finest sense of selection. The bony structure beneath the integuments is never lost sight of, and the extremely delicate depression where the cartilage attaches itself to the nasal bone is no less carefully marked than the prominence caused by the frontal sinus above the root of the nose. In short, for one straight line we have a series of six gentle and unequal curves. We have that alternation of firmness and flexibility, of fixed points of attachment with the elasticity of the softer structures, which is one of the chief causes of beauty in organised forms. None but the sculptor can know how hard it is to render these essential signs of life, and to communicate to the stubborn and monotonous marble or metal that *fleshiness* which nature can suggest even to the sense of sight, partly by slight changes which take place before our eyes, partly through infinite variations of the subtlest kind in the colour of the surface.

These last considerations apply with equal force to some other peculiarities in our noble bronze, which, unlike those remarked upon above, might be mistaken for blemishes by that myopic species of criticism which is unable to take in a work of art as a whole. Thus, an absence of strict symmetry, that is to say, of absolute correspondence of the features on both sides, is very patent in this head. In other words, it will be found that the horizontal lines of the features are not always at right angles with the vertical line, nor precisely parallel with each other. The right brow is rather lower than the left, the right nostril rather higher than its companion. Now, if these aberrations from mathematical accuracy constitute a charge against this head, it only stands in the same position as all the finest antique heads which remain sufficiently unmutilated to admit of a judgment being formed upon them. The head of the Venus of Milo is still more wanting in this kind of symmetry, and scarcely less that yet greater fragment of which the British Museum possesses only a cast (in the Elgin Room), perhaps the grandest head in marble existing. In the head of the Milo Venus the right brow is fully a quarter of an inch lower than the left (the scale is colossal), and the wings of the nose are unequal. In the other it is easy to see, notwithstanding its deplorable condition, that one brow is lower than the other, and that the angles of the mouth are at unequal distances from the eyes. Examples might be multiplied to tediousness, but two crucial instances will suffice. Now, we may surely venture to cherish the belief that the Greek artists knew well what they were doing. There is the best testimony to prove that a definite aim and a clear scientific theory of the mode of attaining it distinguished the greater sculptors, and formed the basis of their teaching. Above all, they knew that the higher needs of art are above all other considerations, and are alone profoundly consistent with the highest vital beauty as it presents itself to us in nature. The sculptor had to deal with the rigid stone and metal; to inspire these with the sense of vitality and mobility, which in real organised bodies is reached by means beyond his power. In the body and limbs the difficulty was conquerable to him by the slightest variation in the action of the opposing members. But to the God-like countenance, the epitome of the outward expression of humanity, he had to give life and intelligence by that *suggestion* of play of the features which, within due limits, is not inconsistent with the most sublime serenity, and is, moreover, in harmony with those laws by which nature acts upon our perceptions and emotions. Can we, then, suppose that these masters were careless just there where the utmost care was needed, or that through ignorance or neglect they deviated from the practice of their fathers in the infancy of art, part of whose care it was to produce mathematical symmetry in the countenance and limbs; or that they were incapable of accomplishing what the merest handicraftsman can achieve by means of rule and compass, or even by the unaided eye? The thought would be absurd. Nature herself undoubtedly *seems* to aim at symmetry in all organised forms, as well in plants as in animated beings; but happily for our sense of beauty she never quite reaches her goal. In those human countenances which approach most nearly to absolute regularity there is a limit which, if once surpassed, leaves us wearied with a sense of 'statuesqueness' such as nobody can long endure. We are not, indeed, without statuesque statues, but they are not to be sought amongst the noblest Greek works which time has left us.

Apart from these anomalies, if such they can be called, in our bronze head, which may be looked upon as designed, and capable of satisfactory explanation, the very evident bulge in the mass of the right jaw remains to be accounted for. Careful examination by able judges goes to show that this blemish is due to forces acting either at the moment when the bronze was violently sundered, or subsequently, through slow pressure continued perhaps up to the time of the discovery. But even this manifest deformity does not mar the beauty of the whole, nor seriously disturb the eye, and in some views it is imperceptible. Previous to the acquisition of this head, the bronze head called Hypnos was considered to be the finest of its kind in England. It is now instructive to compare the Castellani head with the Hypnos, the Homer, and the splendid portrait bust from Cyrene, all exhibited in the same case in the Bronze Room of the British Museum, and all three consummate works in their kind. Every allowance made for the difference in character intended in each, the supremacy of the new guest is at once manifest. In other respects, too, the comparison will be useful; for the mode of using the bronze in these several works for the expression of character and texture shows the capabilities of that material in hands which know how to master it. This diversity of treatment is chiefly observable in the hair: in the lank thin locks of the aged poet; in the crisp close curls of the Cyrenean; in the silky flaccidity of the hair of the sleep-god, which seems one with the downy noiseless owl's wing springing from his temple: finally, in the living, elastic waves, which are kept in check by the diadem that encircles the brow of our goddess.

A monument of a very different class from that just discussed next claims notice by reason of its rarity; it may fairly be said, its uniqueness. The visitor to the British Museum in crossing the First Græco-Roman Saloon may observe upon his right, under a large glass-case, a terra-cotta sarcophagus, surmounted by two half-reclining figures. Rude, quaint, and archaic, this old Etruscan monument will appeal very diversely to different minds. The ignorant may pass it with a smile, or a stronger mark of derision. Those who unite culture with sensibility will be arrested by something undefinably interesting and touching in this singular relic. The art-student will find in it a curious study, and perhaps a hitherto missing link, in the history of art; the *savant*, a starting-point of fruitful research.

The sepulchres of Cære have yielded up incalculable riches—objects of art, gold and jewellery in mass, costly arms, furniture and utensils, but nothing more intrinsically interesting than this clay memorial of a member of some old Cæretan family. When contemplating it we are carried back to a remote era in the history of the Italic nations, when uncertain records shed but fitful gleams upon that mysterious race of the Rasena whose power at one time threatened to absorb the whole peninsula, and utterly change the face of history. Even when compared with other ancient peoples, the Etruscans were remarkable for the veneration which they paid to the dead. They were essentially 'tomb-builders,' to borrow Mr. Fergusson's term, and spared no cost in celebrating the obsequies of the departed, and endeavouring to perpetuate their memory. The *Manes* must be appeased at any price, sometimes indeed with sanguinary rites. We may believe that an early intercourse with Egypt and the East had developed a gloomy mysticism, which easily engrafted itself upon aboriginal coarse and material notions of the spirit's destiny, and rather augmented the terrors of the after-world, which meant a nether world. Of one mode of paying homage to ancestors—that, namely, of placing their effigies upon their coffins or graves—the Tuscans seem to have been the inventors. Their renowned skill in fictile work furthered this practice; for, from the cheap modelling of a child's toy to the entire construction and outfitting of a temple, there was nothing to which it had not extended itself: and republican Rome, that Rome of brick which Augustus transmuted into marble, was indebted to Etruscan artists for some of its chief adornments. In the Etrurian sepulchres by far the greater number of the cinerary urns are of baked clay. A very few have been found carved in stone, of which the British Museum fortunately possesses two very fine examples. These are placed in the Hellenic Room, and being archaic in style may be instructively compared with the sarcophagus under consideration. The small dimensions of this mortuary chest are certainly remarkable; internally they reach only 4 ft. 10 in. by 2 ft., the depth being 1 ft. Yet its floor is marked by a raised border taking the general form of a human figure, and within this we must suppose the body itself to have lain, though no traces of it seem to have been found, for the whole structure was in the fragments to which tomb-plunderers had reduced it centuries ago.

It is indeed conceivable that the body was contracted, by the knees having been bent and raised; but the shallowness of the coffer would allow little room for such abridgment, and still leave the total length irreconcilable with the ordinary proportions of even a female adult. Was, then, the inhabitant of this narrow chamber a child—perhaps the beloved daughter of an otherwise childless father—and is it she whom we see imaged without, as ministering to her aged parent in the realms of Mantus? Without entering on a detailed description of this monument—which would be needless, since it is open to all to examine it for themselves—it may be well to draw attention to certain peculiarities which constitute its uniqueness. The idea of the whole composition is a couch, such as the ancients lay upon at their banquets: but here the banqueters are in the other world. But the spaces between the legs of the couch are filled by panels which form the walls of a sarcophagus. The lid is the mattrass upon which the effigies rest. The reliefs upon the panels seem to tell a connected story—perhaps a Greek mythical one—which has its beginning on the short panel at the foot of the couch. Here we see two warriors in panoply, their features showing grimly through their visored helmets. They appear to be listening to the boding farewells of their friends on either side. The long panel in front exhibits the same pair of warriors mixed in mortal strife. The one, already vanquished and sinking on one knee, struggles to ward off the fatal blow which the victor is dealing with his lance, while the leg of the victim is furthermore fiercely assailed by a panther. On each side a chorus, chiefly females, utters shouts of triumph or wails of despair. On the extreme left, the side of the victor, a small figure—a winged genius—steps upon the scene from a portal; while on the opposite side a similar figure flits rapidly forth in the air, his head turned backwards towards the combatants as in terror. These, it must be presumed, are the protecting genii of the champions. On the upper end of the sarcophagus we have a touching scene presented to us. Two throne-like seats, facing one another, contain each a pair of figures, respectively male and female, sunk in profound grief, each pair being covered by one mantle, a singular and impressive mark of mourning. The second long panel, forming the back-wall of the sarcophagus, is occupied by a banquet-scene, in which one who may be the victor is being served by various friends or attendants as he reclines upon his couch in a hall filled with splendid furniture. In all these figures may be recognised those types which occur on Greek and Etrusco-Hellenic vases of the Second Archaic Period—rather short forms, exaggerated in the muscular development of the limbs, and in the prominence of the features and small crania. The action, though as yet constrained, is suggested by nature, and in strenuous movements is full of vehemence. A fine feeling for composition prevails throughout in these reliefs, and unmistakably shows Hellenic influence. Simplicity, directness, and clearness, are combined with perfect balance of parts, and it is by this last quality that the Greeks, even in their primitive efforts, evince their true intuition of Art as something essentially distinct from mere imitation on the one hand, or from picture-writing on the other. There are some observable and interesting differences between the treatment of the reliefs and that of the round figures which recline on the couch above; and assuming both to be by the same hand, we may not unreasonably conclude that in the relief subjects the modeller followed faithfully the style he had acquired from Hellenic example or teaching; that in the round figures, on the contrary, he was left to his own resources, and turned directly to nature to solve the difficulties presented to him. In them we find a careful and *naïve* effort to imitate actual nature—an effort by no means unsuccessful, but resulting in something widely different from that achieved by the Greeks in an analogous stage of art. The figures are meagre and sinewy, even making allowance for some shrinking of the clay in the oven. The bony structure is carefully observed, and a fair attempt is made to render the muscular forms. But all is totally without a sense of selection, or a knowledge of the laws which govern movement. The elaborate and conscientious modelling of the hands and feet is most deserving of notice: every crease and marking of the digits of both extremities, and of the palms and soles, is reproduced with minute accuracy to the best of the artist's ability. The extreme length and tenuity of the toes of both figures are striking. The second toe is produced beyond the great one to an extent far exceeding that attained in any Greek statue, and the others follow in like excessive proportion. This fact invites speculation; for in a work of so much native simplicity and painful imitation, it must be presumed that the artist followed what he saw about him every day, and truly—if even with some slight and unconscious exaggeration—reproduced the types of a race very distinct from our own. Yet, with all this observant accuracy and iconic detail in the body and limbs, the heads exhibit singular discrepancy. Here it is hard to believe in any attempt at portraiture. A fixed archaic conventional type seems to have been followed, in close analogy with early Greek art, and which again resembles that art in the sharp distinction between the fixedness of the features and the earnest attempt at life and reality in the limbs. However, it is probable that such a monument as this was produced some time after the decease of the person or persons represented, when portraiture was no longer possible save by an effort of memory, which the artist lacked either the skill or the conditions to put in force.

This remarkable relic has no true counterpart amongst those of its class hitherto discovered. The only one which at all competes with it is that of the Campana Collection in the Louvre: but this is apparently of a later date than Signor Castellani's, and is, besides, deficient in the reliefs which distinguish the latter, and devoid of an inscription.

Space fails here to touch upon any others of the contents of this splendid collection. There is scarcely an object to be found in it upon which, either for itself or in its multifarious relations, whole tracts might not be written,—but by abler hands.

FRED. W. BURTON.

M. DE GRAVESANDE'S ETCHINGS.

THIS is a collection of twelve plates in a portfolio, with a thirteenth plate as a title-page. There has been no attempt to unite them together into a series, the interest they have is independent, and their sizes are varied as much as possible. The subjects include a forest-scene and some rural or water-scenes, almost entirely taken from Holland. The manner of work is either that of the pure line, used with great economy and intelligence, or else the organic line supporting masses of shade, but in every case it is really etcher's work, and not in any way an imitation of engraving.

M. de Gravesande (his name in full is Carel Nicolaas Storm van 'S Gravesande) is a Dutch gentleman, with the title of Jonkeer, and a son of the Vice-President of the House of Representatives, who is also a member of the Council of State. He studied for the bar, and took the degree of Doctor of Law at the University of Leyden, but having a strong taste for art quitted legal studies at this point, and entered upon the pursuit of painting, at first rather in the spirit of amateurship, but later with the serious intention of following the artistic career, to which he has ever since faithfully adhered. I may mention that an ancestor of M. de Gravesande's is known to us in England as a natural philosopher and the friend of our own Newton.

It has sometimes been doubted whether it is possible for a man situated as M. de Gravesande has been situated to become an artist in the completest sense of the word. Some people really believe that it is necessary, in order to become a painter, to begin life in poverty and ignorance, and work at painting from childhood as a simple mechanical trade. The fine arts are so full of manual and technical difficulty as to be scarcely compatible, it is thought, with any elaborateness of literary or scientific education, and there is such a strong association in the popular mind between poverty and painting (*pauvre comme un peintre* is proverbial in France) that if any student happens to be in easy circumstances it is inferred that he is inevitably condemned to amateurship. Now in this work of M. de Gravesande's there is at the same time something to correct the popular opinion and something to confirm it. This is not at all amateur's work as we generally find it, and still there are, in some plates, visible traces of amateurship, though it be by no means of a common kind. The *Entrée de Forêt* is very strong work, indeed; the spectator finds himself at the entrance of a pine-forest full of sombre gloom enough to suggest Dantesque imaginings: indeed this plate is one of the most impressive sylvan subjects I ever met with—capitally etched, too, with vigorous organic markings and most skilful shadings and *salissures* of the copper surface between the lines. Another plate, which has given me very great pleasure, though in quite a different sense, is entitled, *Au bord du Gein près Abconde,* and represents a tranquil river-scene with a windmill. Here we have scarcely any deep bitings, except a few vigorous lines in the foreground whilst the mill and trees on the river-bank are treated with the utmost delicacy. The mill is simply reflected in the calm river, and there is a delicious study of flat shore, with great quiet spaces of sky and water. M. de Gravesande is most felicitous in his introduction of boats and windmills, which give such animation to the scenery of Holland. His views of the Abconde lake, though it is a kind of lake scenery as different as possible from that of Cumberland or Scotland, are charming works of art, and convey to us so completely the spirit and impression of the scene that we do not at first perceive the extreme simplicity of the means employed, and the cunning economy of labour. M. de Gravesande's boats and boatmen are always full of life, even when the man is a speck on shore, or the sail a speck on the horizon; and his study of water deserves praise for thoroughness and temperance,—a true indication of the perspective of rippling surfaces, and that delicate noting of reflections which marks what is most faintly perceptible, and rejects all arbitrary theories of what the water-phenomena ought to be for a subtly affectionate observation of what they are. The sky is less thoroughly studied, no doubt for the good reason that if an etcher puts much into his sky he is compelled to carry out a much more elaborate and complete tonality in his foreground also; and M. de Gravesande has often contented himself with a few touches on the white space, or a rapid outlining of clouds, or even with the perfect emptiness of a sky left wholly blank: which last in a good etching is by no means meaningless, for it always forcibly suggests the serenity of cloudless space.

An etcher who belongs to the school of what may be called full chiaroscuro, in which every shade is laboriously given and nothing left to the imagination, told me that whilst line-sketches might please at the first glance, they were immediately exhausted, whereas laborious plates in complete chiaroscuro rewarded every new investigation of their contents. I do not find that the first half of this proposition stands the test of experience, and these etchings before me may be mentioned as a case in point. Since I first had the pleasure of possessing them I have gone through the whole series certainly fifty times, as we read over and over again some lyric that has delighted us long ago; and yet this very morning the best of these plates gave me just as much enjoyment, and an enjoyment as fresh and keen, as they did many months since. All the twelve plates are not equally excellent; indeed one of them, *Moulin près Abconde*, is decidedly poor in material and composition, and has quite an amateurish look, whilst the tree-subject, *Aux Environs de Dinant*, though forcible and right in tone, is certainly too arbitrary in manner, straight lines being used for shading in too great abundance, without sufficient regard for the nature of the material, whether hill, tree, or road, as the case may be. But, on the other hand, there are plates in this series which are quite perfect harmonies of artistic thought and work. *L'Escaut à Burght près Anvers* is one of these, full of subtle qualities of composition, which I do not dwell upon farther only because it is of no use doing so unless the plate itself accompanied this article, and executed from beginning to end with such absolute harmony of manner that it comes upon the mind like music. *Le Lac d'Abconde* has the same qualities, and though in this plate the willows on the right are drawn rather as Thomas Hood used to draw trees in his pen-sketches, it is possible that, to quote the wise defence of an artist who knew what art was, 'had they been better, they would have been worse.'

Considering that this is a first publication there might be a risk in attempting to fix prematurely the rank of M. de Gravesande amongst contemporary etchers; but if an artist is to be judged by his best work, it is clear that this etcher has claims to very respectful consideration. There are good reasons for doubting whether etching of this peculiar quality can, any more than poetry, be produced at will; and the only way to secure it, even for those who have the natural gift, is to make a careful and severe selection from the mass of their attempts. This is the more inevitable in the case of such an artist as M. de Gravesande, that his impressions are conveyed directly to the copper without rebiting, and almost without retouching or correction of any kind.

EDITOR.

PORTRAIT OF PENELOPE BOOTHBY.

THE accompanying lithograph is from the famous picture of the child Penelope Boothby, painted by Reynolds in July 1788. Under its more familiar name of the 'Mob Cap,' this has always been one of the most popular of Reynolds's portraits of children. It is now the property of Lord Dudley, and was sent, together with the rest of his vast collections, to the Academy Exhibition of Old Masters in 1871. The painting has suffered, especially in the background, from the deteriorations too often fatal to this master's handiwork; but not in any degree that either impairs the beauty of colour in the dress, which is in Reynolds's favourite key of warm, creamy white, or effaces the subtle meetness of the child's expression with that subdued whimsicality lurking beneath its housewifely gravity and coyness.

THE THREE CATHEDRALS DEDICATED TO ST. PAUL.*

THIRD NOTICE.

IN the last number we traced the history of St. Paul's Cathedral down to the time when the recovery of the Prince of Wales gave a new and powerful impetus to the scheme already set on foot for its so-called completion. The immediate consequence of this was the passing of a resolution, dated March 21st, 1872, 'That it is expedient to obtain the highest professional advice upon the various works connected with the completion of St. Paul's;' and on April 22nd Mr. Burges was selected to fill this important position. Thereupon ensued one of those explosions which rage periodically, by which, as it would seem, we think to make up for our usual apathy and ignorance in matters of art. In the present instance the opposing parties founded their arguments for the most part on a misapprehension of the real merits of the case; the supporters and opposers of Mr. Burges' nomination, strangely enough, ranking themselves respectively under the well-worn banners of Gothic and Renaissance. While all true lovers of Wren's architecture hoped that the controversy might end in postponement and reconsideration, or at least in the limitation of the architect to certain non-essential modifications of the building, rumours of possibilities in the choice of an alternative adviser made an unconditional commission to Mr. Burges by no means the most hopeless aspect of the case. But in order to explain our view of the conditions of the undertaking and of the merits of the selection, it is necessary to speak of the state of decorative art in England at the present time and of Mr. Burges' antecedent connexion with it.

Since the fifteenth century decorative art in England has been practically extinct. During the Middle Ages, and more especially towards their close, decoration was an integral and important element in the art of Ecclesiastical building, so much so that an undecorated church of the Middle Ages may be safely looked upon as an incomplete and imperfect work according to the intention and ideas of its originators. The decoration of a church was carried out under the same conditions as its substantial erection, namely by a guild of decorators aided by all the facilities involved in perfect organization, unbroken tradition and constant practice. The result was a manner of decoration which architecturally was complete and perfect. In the best examples, especially of the later periods, the scheme and the purely decorative design leave nothing to be desired; on the other hand, those portions of the design which depend rather upon the imagination and skill of the individual painter often fall short of the standard which later developments of art have established. The Renaissance changed the essential conditions of the building arts throughout Europe, giving pre-eminence to the individual artist at the expense of the guild. In place of the harmonious working of the constructional and decorative arts to one common end, thenceforward a building was likely to contain a predominant expression of one element of the entire art which happened to be the special province of the individual designer. On the other hand, the marvellous versatility of the great artists of the *cinque cento* often enabled the same individual to undertake both constructional and purely decorative works, and also to produce a harmony and fusion between the two elements in those works in which the constructional or decorative predominated. In Michael Angelo's hands, constructional architecture attains to a vigorous and masterly independence, as in St. Peter's; in the Sistine Chapel, whose *raison d'être* is mainly decorative, a few architectural touches almost thoughtlessly thrown in give unity and arrangement to the whole. The last-named work, however, must be considered to have permanently readjusted the mutual limitations of architectural arrangement and imaginative design; and in the future any scheme of decoration which does not allow full scope for the unfettered imagination of our greatest painters must be considered unworthy of the highest lessons which the past has left us.

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* A History of the Three Cathedrals dedicated to St. Paul in London, with reference chiefly to their Structure and Architecture, and the Sources whence the necessary Funds were derived. By William Longman, F.S.A. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1873.

But while in Italy the Renaissance opened out new fields for the designer, in England it proved almost exclusively destructive to the higher branches of decorative art. While the more vernacular and domestic phases of the art became established and indigenous, lingered with us until finally smothered by the Gothic revival, and even now are to some extent recoverable, the few attempts at higher and more imaginative decoration were for the most part mere imperfect and unsatisfactory reflections of the art of Italy, and as such have failed to take root with us. Meanwhile, in connexion with the Gothic revival, and as a result partly of an utter misappreciation of the scope and intentions of Mediæval Architecture,—partly perhaps of an ingenious attempt, in view of the deadness of decorative art, to make a virtue of necessity and to disguise our poverty of resources under a theory of asceticism,—some architects have solved the problem by lining their so-called Mediæval churches with rude rubble-walling and finishing their Gothic houses with the crude desolation of stop-chamfers and stained deal. Under such conditions, decorative art has been more and more relegated to the 'trade,' and has formed a light and elegant æsthetic supplement to the more utilitarian functions of the plumber and glazier. Thus the depth of degeneration has been sounded, and some signs of reaction and recovery are becoming manifest. Here and there an architect has become conscious of the desirability, if not of the necessity, of painting for the completion of his work, and has employed colour tentatively at first, and with more and more boldness as experience has been gained. One or two instances might be named in which a large portion of the lost art of the fifteenth century has, by individual effort, and consequently under somewhat changed conditions, been successfully recovered. On the other hand, some few eminent artists have turned their attention to wall-painting as a legitimate and important branch of their art, and we may confidently assert that it is not in the painter's portion of the decorative art that weakness is most to be looked for.

Remarking by the way that we have so far heard no mention of the name of any one of our greatest contemporary painters in connexion with the proposed decoration of St. Paul's, we have only to add that the future development of architectural decoration, if it is to be worthy of our precedents, must consist in a proper fusion of the arrangement and fitness developed by the Gothic school of design with the conditions of freedom, breadth and scope for the painter which was inaugurated by the Renaissance.

We remarked above that it was by a complete misapprehension that the ancient war-cries of Gothic and Renaissance were raised in connexion with Mr. Burges' nomination as architect for the 'completion' of St. Paul's. Mr. Burges was for many years well known as a learned and enthusiastic advocate of a special phase of French thirteenth-century architecture. In the competition for the Law Courts he submitted a design in his chosen style, which was almost unanimously praised by professional architects for its breadth, dignity, and repose. The Fellows of Worcester College, Oxford, being dissatisfied with a design which they had obtained for the rehabilitation of their chapel, in which, as we understand, the stock receipt of Lombardising Renaissance architecture—a receipt which has ruined so many of our City churches—had been once more employed, consulted Mr. Burges on the strength of the merits of his competitive design. Apparently a more inapplicable precedent could not have been imagined. Probably the employers were only aiming at a somewhat more original and artistic form of Gothicisation, and were neither more or less surprised than others who were acquainted with Mr. Burges' opinions and antecedents at the scheme which he proposed. Fortunately, to whatever extent they were surprised, they had the good sense to fall in with Mr. Burges' views, and are justly proud of the result, which is extraordinarily creditable to the architect's versatility, and scarcely less so, considering the conditions under which the decorative architect of the present day has to work, to his artistic power. After the experience of his treatment of this work, it would be far more rational to charge him with a rather too indiscriminate adoption of Renaissance traditions than with inexpugnable Gothic prejudices. The other main charge made against him, that he despised and abused Wren's work, if more specious, was scarcely of greater practical weight, the precedent of Worcester Chapel being sufficient guarantee that his object would be to develope the resources of the style in which the cathedral is built. Certainly we should have been pleased if his appreciation of Wren had been strong enough to lead him to advise that the building should be restored to the form in which Wren left it; but probably the authorities were unchangeably set upon 'completion,' and the result of such action would have been merely to throw the building on the tender mercies of an alternative adviser,—a dismal possibility to be averted at any cost. But admitting that Mr. Burges' appointment was free from many of the objections urged against it, we would once more ask the question, earnestly and almost despairingly,—Has the time come when we are justified in touching the one building whose importance can never be surpassed? and has any one so far given proof that he is at present competent to undertake a work which is by its very conditions a failure unless it be permanently a triumph of decorative art?

The first question is sufficiently answered for those who either appreciate the condition of the decorative arts in England, or will accept our view as given above. To answer the latter question, we must go back in a more critical spirit to the interior of Worcester College Chapel, and ask if any one could candidly say that he would entrust St. Paul's to the designer of that decoration, even allowing for a considerable increase of power and experience? Is it not sufficiently obvious that the work everywhere betrays the effort of an individual, by great cleverness and dexterity, to do what never yet has been done successfully but by the aid of tradition and wide-spread culture, at periods when art was not a matter of research and knowledge but was *in the air?* Even with a building of such small dimensions the decorative scheme fails in unity of conception; individual portions of the design have the appearance of having been got through *anyhow*, without the guidance of any definite imaginative idea; certain decorative devices of the Renaissance, which we can accept readily in an old work, are introduced crude, and in a work of our own time have an absurd effect; here and there the artist appears to be performing a harlequinade, which would be fatal to the dignity of a work of monumental importance; the colour not only lacks unity in arrangement, but is often crude and impure in individual tints, giving the impression that the artist's eye was insensitive to colour until unduly emphasised; the arrangements for the introduction of the painter's work are not worthy of the best precedents of antiquity; and probably no great imaginative artist of this or of any other time would be content to work in rectangular panels which admitted figures only a few inches in height formally arranged; finally, the stained glass is very much 'on its own hook,' and fulfils neither of the alternative conditions of the introduction of that rather embarrassing form of art, which we take to be either that it should be brought into perfect harmony with the rest of the design in scale or continuity, or, better still, that it should conform to the conditions of the best Mediæval arrangement, and be made quite secondary and subservient to the mural decoration, either by being kept altogether transparent in colour, or by the decorative portions being limited in size, so that a sufficient share of transparent glass is provided, and the wall-painting allowed full scope and ample light.

It is only with regard to the future of St. Paul's that we have allowed ourselves to indulge in these criticisms, by far the pleasanter portion of our task having been to express our admiration of the artist's versatility and skill. But it is as well that we should thoroughly realise that no individual power or proficiency can at once bridge over the great gulf which is fixed between the decorative degradation of a few years past, and the diffused critical education and practised artistic skill which should alone give us confidence to approach one of the greatest undertakings of modern times.

For the future of decorative art we are not hopeless. In view of the constantly-increasing interest which the public takes in the subject, of the great ability which the several individual efforts at the revival of the art display, of the fact that the combination and harmonising of the great precedents of past time afford us a new and glorious field for decorative attainment,—we believe that possibly a time may come when the decoration even of St. Paul's may not be an act of presumption. Judging by the usual rate of artistic progress such a time is certainly remote, but it may be hastened, and by nothing so successfully as by a definite object kept steadily in view, and the judicious use of money towards its attainment.

Having so far hinted at a scheme which we hope to develope in the next number, we may, in conclusion, sum up the position we take to this result. Esteeming the definite results of the past more highly than the possible attainments of the future, we should have been glad if the scheme for the improvement of St. Paul's could have taken the form of restoration to the state in which Wren left it together with the addition of such ritual arrangements as a more earnest and popular form of worship has rendered desirable. Supposing such a scheme to have been rendered permanently impracticable by the loyal enthusiasm of the public, we acquiesce in the nomination of Mr. Burges to conduct its future destinies; but having regard to the degradation of decorative art generally and to the infantile nature of its best essays up to the present time, we would gladly see the prospect of ultimate attainment sought at the expense of the gratification of present enthusiasm.

While we write we are told of the gilding of the ribs of the cupola, and hear rumours of the intended gilding of the ribs of the great dome. Under present circumstances we would welcome some such harlequinade as would lead the public to assert the rights of criticism and control which it most undoubtedly possesses. Delay and reconsideration at any cost are the great desideratum; but if indiscreet public zeal could be turned into a channel of permanent and general decorative improvement, with the decoration of St. Paul's for its ultimate goal, we should be content to waive archæological preferences.

Basil Champneys.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.*

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the winter comes very late in our latitude, as it does from time to time, we pass to spring quite suddenly. The temperature rises in the course of a single night as if we had travelled far southwards, and felt the breezes from the African shore of the Mediterranean. The snow and ice thaw rapidly; the little streams become impassable torrents; the rivulets become rivers; the rivers spread themselves over the plain, and carry ruin to a thousand homesteads. There was something ominous in the excessive mildness of the temperature when we awoke one morning in March. The snow lay deep upon the earth, but the air was warm and enervating. Already the tiny stream in the Val Ste. Véronique had increased in volume, and before nightfall it roared angrily, its turbid waters, confined between steep banks, carrying logs of wood that had been purposely laid along its sides, and other burdens that had not been so intentionally confided to its care. Most of the little wooden bridges are removed in a flood of this kind, the earth is washed away from the roots of the trees, and many an alder falls.

With the thaw came a deluge of rain, and the torrents roared in all the glens. We who were at the head of the waters began to expect evil tidings from the plains. Every drop that now fell on the soaked earth of the forest must find its way ultimately to the Loire. Fortunately the hills were richly clothed with wood, which retards the departure of the rainfall, and converts what would be a sudden crisis of devastation into the endurable floods of twelve or twenty days. And still the waters descended rapidly enough to give ample reason for anxiety. We in our hills were safe, and the buildings in our valley had been so arranged by the foresight of the monks who first erected them as to be clear from any possible inundation; but already the torrent was washing the stone-faced embankment of the garden-terrace, and if the monks had not built their stone bridge lower down, which to strangers always seemed so uselessly wide in summer, our road communication would have been entirely interrupted. I felt curious to see the effects of the flood, and, notwithstanding the incessant rain, we quitted the Val Ste. Véronique and drove in the direction of the Loire.

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* It happens that the illustrations that appear with this number do not precisely belong to the chapters which are printed now, or at least this is more especially true of one of them. Our contributor, M. Greux, could not let us have his plate in time, so I have inserted instead of it a second plate of my own, which had been intended for a later issue.

Two days of driving along the shore of one of the tributary rivers brought us to a standstill near the Loire, on account of the destruction of a bridge, but in several places the highroad had been covered with water to the depth of two or three feet, and we had driven through a sort of lake, but a lake with a current that reached up to the horse's belly. One of these places I remember better than any other, on account of the extreme difficulty of following the line of road, which ran upon an embankment made purposely to render communication possible in times of flood. Unfortunately, however, the ingenious road-makers had entirely forgotten to indicate the direction of their embankment, which for extraordinary times ought to have been marked by posts, so we were continually in danger of rolling over the side of it into the deep water to the right or left. We certainly should never have passed this without accident, had not a peasant come up in his spring-cart just at the right moment, and led the way, which was familiar to him in all seasons.

This little excursion was not undertaken simply for our amusement. I desired to observe the action of water in the great inundations, and to ascertain how far certain projects might reduce the destruction of property, if ever they were carried into effect. Many very painful cases of such destruction came under our immediate observation, and of all these the most painful was that of a very small peasant-proprietor who had abandoned his cottage just as we came upon the scene. The highroad at this place followed the side of a hill fully two hundred feet above the river, and the tiny farmstead occupied a rocky promontory that jutted into the stream itself. This promontory had become an island, and the peasant who owned the little property had just quitted it with his family in one of those awkward flat boats that are used to cross these rivers. The water had risen so fast that he had only saved half his cattle. In the attempt to drive them across the deepening gulf, his best pair of draught oxen and a milk cow had been carried away, and were hurried down the rocky river-bed, where it would have been madness to attempt to follow them. The man and his family had come up as far as the road, and were sitting there with eyes fixed upon their cottage, a picture of perfect misery and dejection. The water was still rising, and thundering through the narrow valley as the little streams did two days before amongst the upper hills, but here the river was on such a scale that all contest with it was absolutely hopeless. As it beat upon the walls of the cottage, pouring into the window and doorway, it became evident that the building could not long resist a force so constant in its application. Before long the roof alone was visible, and the current was undermining the rafters, detaching the mortar in which they were imbedded, loosening the rough stones, and making the final ruin an inevitable certainty. By this time it was already late. The moon had risen, and wild shreds of stormy, lead-coloured rain-cloud were driving before her face; the opposite shore of the river was lost in impenetrable gloom, but the swirls of the water were drawn clearly enough by silvery reflections, and the cottage came out against them in a black *silhouette*. Suddenly the roof moved—it was lifted as with levers—then the other side sank in the water, and there was a great boiling confusion of eddy and spray, out of which one or two black masses shortly rose into distinctness. These floated away to the southwards. One gable stood for a minute, then fell heavily into the river with a splash that was visible but inaudible in the roar of the inundation, and after that nothing remained to mark the place of the little homestead, but the water surged over it in the moonlight, and a floating tree passed without hindrance where it had been.

I shall make no attempt to depict the despair of the unfortunate proprietor. He had built the cottage and its outbuildings a few years before, against the advice of some inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who had predicted the catastrophe we witnessed. With that passion for land-owning which is always characteristic of the French peasant, he had invested the savings of twenty years in a miserably barren plot of ground almost surrounded by a bend of the river, and there he had erected those thatched buildings which were the pride and delight of his eyes. I wish to imply no accusation of extraordinary selfishness, but it is certain that the peasant is more directly touched by a calamity of this kind than by almost any other form of calamity. The water could not wash his land away—that at least was safe—but it could do much to spoil his improvements; and then the cattle—the mighty oxen which the peasant loves so well! So soon as the last vestige of his dwelling had disappeared (it fascinated him whilst it remained) he sprang to his feet, and cried *Mes bœufs! Mes bœufs!* and went away wildly down the river side to try and get a glimpse of the lost cattle. Not a trace of them was to be seen anywhere on our bank of the stream, and as for the other, which was all gloomy mystery beneath the moon, no human eye could penetrate it.

Misfortunes of this kind occur very frequently during the great floods, and although these floods are sure to happen at least once in every decade, men build in the very path of them, as they build in the path of the lava on the perilous slopes of Vesuvius. Houses and bridges are carried away, and other houses made uninhabitable till they have been dried by the heats of summer. Whole districts are laid waste in a night or two, and the inundation inflicts more material injury and loss than the march of an invading army. We ascended an eminence on the eastern bank of the Loire, and there from the tower of a village church we beheld a sheet of water stretching westwards like an inland sea, with villages islanded in it, and liquid leagues between them. The rapidity of modern communication has in some degree lessened the evil consequences of these floods; the telegraph warns the cities in succession, and the march of the water is known beforehand almost as accurately as the travelling of a steamship; but no government has yet ventured to undertake the colossal works which would be necessary to defend the country effectually.

On our return to the Val Ste. Véronique the weather was bright and genial, and though the rivers filled the fields yet, the water had the cheerful look of a summer irrigation, with the sunshine dancing on the ripples, and people going about in boats for their amusement, enchanted with the notion of floating over the hedges, but still prudently avoiding the central current of the river. It was pleasant to see the great white cumuli in the clear blue sky, and to watch their bright reflections on the broad surface of the subsiding flood. There is a story of a certain learned professor, who being invited to dine somewhere in the country, remained silent for a long space, his host waiting the while to gather the words of wisdom that were expected to proceed from his lips. At last he opened them and said, 'How green the fields look!' an observation remarkable neither for its novelty nor its depth. And yet there are times when, like that learned professor, the greenness of the fields will strike us with a novelty and a freshness that seek an outlet in expression, and we babble of their verdure. So it was with us on our return to the Val Ste. Véronique. Whatever green there was in nature appeared to us strangely fresh and sweet after our seclusion in the wintry forest, and the blue and white of a broader sky than we had lately been accustomed to, produced in us a hopeful cheerfulness that seemed almost blameably selfish after the calamities of the preceding days.

The morning after our return to the valley we rose early, and breathed an air at once so mild and pure that we knew the spring had come.

Spring is much rather the season of poets than of painters. What delights us in the spring is more a sensation than an appearance, more a hope than any visible reality. There is something in the softness of the air, in the lengthening of the days, in the very sounds and odours of the sweet time, that caresses and consoles us after the rigorous weeks of winter. It is natural that poets should love the spring, which comes to them with a thousand flowers, with songs of birds, with purer, brighter light, and such refreshment that it is like a fountain of *jouvence.* So they hail the season with their most melodious invocations, sometimes in grave earnestness, as if its benefits were too great to be treated lightly, and sometimes in frolic merriment like the dancing of kids or lambs. Thomson is grave and stately :—

'Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.'

Nash greets the spring in another tone and measure :—

'Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king ;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring.
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !

The palm and may make country-houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay—
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet—
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !
Spring ! the sweet Spring !'

These extracts are as dissimilar as can be, and yet in both of them we may observe a characteristic they have in common. It is much more the sounds and sensations of the pleasant time than anything that is to be seen which awaken the enthusiasm of the poet. The 'ethereal mildness' of Thomson, with the shower of shadowing roses and the awakening music, strike his imagination before any landscape distinctly rises before it. Nash says that 'cold doth not sting,' the 'fields breathe sweet,' and he imitates the songs of the birds, which serve him for a refrain On the other hand, I well remember a large picture of Spring by Daubigny, which was very disappointing both to myself and others ; and the disappointment was most probably due to the inevitable absence of those very delights of sound and sense which refresh us so much in nature. and of which the poets are so careful to remind us. What would spring be without the *spring feeling*—that quite peculiar exhilaration that comes to us, we know not how, like far-off reminiscences of youth ?

The only landscape-painter who ever dedicated his powers to this season of the year with a devotion all but exclusive of every other was Constable. He liked the freshness of the season as a pleasure for the eye, and his own eye longed for it and loved it, because he was in a state of intense antagonism to the brown doctrine in landscape-painting, and the spring greens were all on his own side of the controversy. In estimating the value of Constable's opinion on this matter we ought therefore to remember that it was not quite an unbiassed opinion, that his mind was not at all in a neutral or judicial state, but that he was like a Protestant theologian seeking texts against tradition ; and that his texts were the young verdure, the shade and shower, the cool and pearly light, and soft blue shadow beside it, the sparkle and glitter of daisy-pied pastures in the moisture of an English April. Now whatever a good artist paints is sure to be harmonious, for the simple reason that he makes it so ; and there is no doubt that any first-rate landscape-painter who chooses to paint a spring scene will get a harmony out of it (as he will out of anything in the world), which may be used afterwards as a critical argument in favour of the 'year's pleasant king.' But the plain truth is that *Nature* is not harmonious at this season, she is only in the way of becoming so. The colours that she gives are delicious separately, as we happen to come upon them, and they do our eyes good after the chills of winter; the green especially is good for us, and we welcome it with an uncritical gladness: but when we think of painting, it may be doubted whether any season of the year is less propitious than this to the broad and noble harmonies which are the secret of all grand effects in art. A patch of green in this place and that, quite crude as yet and utterly isolated; a constant contradiction between the sunshine and the wintry-looking woods; a few plants precociously early, and nobler ones lagging behind; the season resembles nothing so much as that uncomfortable hour in the daily life of a household when some of its members, the early-risers, are already walking about as if they did not quite know what to do with themselves, and others have not yet come down to breakfast. No, summer and not spring is the landscape-painter's time of harmony,—late summer, when the pheasants go to the harvest-fields, and come home with songs in the warm-toned, mellow moonlight, and all the trees have had time to assume the fulness of their foliage.

Yet spring has its own charms, especially for young people, who have it within their breasts. I think perhaps, as we get older, and are saddened by the gloomier experiences of life, that the recurrence of the earliest leaves and flowers does not always increase our cheerfulness very much. We know too well the limits of a year, how short a space it is, how little that will be satisfactory afterwards can be done in it whilst it lasts. We think of the other springs that now lie far behind us, and how we lost them in vain pleasures, or profitless labour that seems to us still more vain. Will this year be better used? Already it is slipping away from under us, and pray what have we done? Made plans, perhaps, to be afterwards modified, and, it may be, finally abandoned, to join all those other ghostly schemes and projects so various in conception, so monotonous in the negative result. It is only, I imagine, the simply and intensely practical who are never assailed by any such regrets as these; to them the business of living seems a very plain, straightforward business, and they follow their own lines, as locomotives do, with the least possible friction or loss.

(*To be continued.*)

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XXII.—GUSTAVE GREUX.

Going to Labour (*after Troyon*).

MANY readers will remember the noble Troyon in the Luxembourg which M. Greux has chosen to etch for this number of the *Portfolio.* The picture has always been a great favourite with artists, and is one of Troyon's strongest works, though not perhaps in all respects the best adapted for engraving, on account of the large space about the animals, which in the original picture is rendered less monotonous by well-managed and various colour.

M. Greux (a pupil of Gleyre) is a painter who, like many other painters in this century, took to etching some years ago, simply from an interest in the art. 'Next to painting,' he says, 'etching seemed to me the most interesting of the arts.' His first picture was exhibited in the Salon of 1859, and afterwards won a medal at Besançon; his first etching, from a picture by Theodore Rousseau,* was exhibited in 1861, but he had already made many experiments in private. M. Greux continued to exhibit etchings in subsequent years, two of which, the *Interior of Notre Dame* and *The Screen of St. Etienne du Mont*, were important in size, and the latter of the two obtained an honourable mention at Paris and a medal at Vienna. M. Greux has also won a medal for more recent works exhibited at the Salon of 1873. He is a contributor to our excellent contemporary the 'Gazette des Beaux Arts.'

P. G. HAMERTON.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF GERMANY IN CONTEMPORARY ART.

I.

GREAT political changes have mostly been accompanied by corresponding mutations in national arts. A people no sooner obtains power or acquires wealth than architects, sculptors, and painters, arise to bring about what in history is known as a revival or a new birth. The arts in Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, and Italy, obeyed common laws of development; and now, after the lapse of centuries, it becomes an interesting problem whether the military success and the material prosperity of Germany will be followed by the usual growth and efflorescence. At the present moment all things are in transition—the final issue of changes accomplished or impending is still uncertain—and many years must pass before the causes brought into play can work out their legitimate effects. Still, already signs are given that the arts will share in the prevailing progress and prosperity. At first sight it might appear that Austria proper and her allied nationalities lie outside the movement. On the contrary, however, few countries are making more rapid advance, and certainly no capitals have received within the last ten years such signal architectural development, as Vienna and Pesth. I shall therefore speak of Germany in the widest sense of the term. The present article will treat of Painting, the next of Sculpture, the third and last of Architecture.

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* I may observe that M. Greux has quite an especial talent for the interpretation of Theodore Rousseau, from natural affinity, and the study which comes from affection. See the little landscape illustrating the 'Sylvan Year' in last month's *Portfolio.*

I have been naturally led to this inquiry by a journey through Germany, from which I have just returned, extending from Cologne on the north-west to Pesth on the south-east, including of course Vienna and her vast Exhibition. This international gathering comprises a total of more than 5000 art-works, whereof 3000 are pictures, 1000 statues, and the remaining 1000 architectural drawings and miscellanies. Never before have the German peoples appeared in equal power, and the immediate juxtaposition in which they are placed with other nationalities favours the comparison which I here propose to institute. Perhaps the first impressions made on the mind are the great capacity for production possessed by the German States, the large number of art-producing centres, and the high percentage of the population devoted to æsthetic culture. It is manifest that the 5000 works here selected are but gleanings; the number might have been indefinitely multiplied. In like manner, Düsseldorf, Munich, Berlin, Weimar, Stuttgard, Karlsruhe, Vienna, and Pesth, are scarcely one-half of the art-capitals which are or might have been represented. Another general conclusion to which these data point is that Germany possesses talent of singular uniformity—of extended area rather than of elevated surface; indeed, the prevailing contour of the art-mind in those territories occupying Central Europe may be compared to table-lands, which seldom rise into a mountain, and are often barren, save under persistent husbandry. The soil of France has a more spontaneous growth; French art is more joyous and varied.

The German nation shows herself strong on canvas, for the same reason that she is powerful on the battle-field. Little appreciable progress has been made since the exhibition in Munich four years ago, but just as armies when united are irresistible, so artists when concentrated, instead of scattered, become more than formerly imposing. Changes, however, do not fail to make themselves felt with the lapse of time. One generation after another passes away, and what seems strange is, that the generation for the moment in the ascendant makes a clean sweep of what has gone before. Thus Overbeck and Cornelius, when they rendered up their last account, left to posterity fame, but few followers. The men who reign in their stead are not spiritualists after the manner of the Italian Pre-Raphaelites, neither do they make display of muscular Christianity like Michael Angelo and his Teutonic disciple Cornelius; on the contrary, they give themselves over to naturalism and realism, and thus add strength to the parties who now rule throughout Europe. In Munich even Kaulbach has had his day; the sceptre of command is already in the hands of Professor Piloty, whose last great achievement, *The Triumph of Germanicus*, has given to Germany in the Vienna Exhibition a position higher even than that of France. The picture is thirty feet long, the figures are life-size, the scene is laid in the streets of Imperial Rome, majestic palaces rise on either side, and in the midst Germanicus advances with loud acclaim. But the eyes of all are fixed on the German captive Thusnelda, majestic in bearing, and leading by the hand her little son. The picture illustrates the fundamental principles promulgated by Professor Piloty. The subject is chosen for its nobility and fitness for art-treatment, the situation is seized upon dramatically, and the characters are exalted to the uttermost by beauty and dignity of form, and by every possible appliance of light, shade, and colour. The style shows the latest stage in the painter's development; texture and realism become less obtrusive, while on the other hand the figures reach a higher generalisation. Possibly the objection may be urged that the manner is artificial, and that the types are far removed from individual nature. But such seem the inevitable penalties of an art based on absolute principles; the concrete must be surrendered to the abstract, the each must be merged in the all. Even Raphael in his mature period had to pay this penalty. I think, however, it may be admitted, that amid successive changes Munich has proved herself constant to an ideal. Thus Cornelius, Kaulbach, and Piloty, notwithstanding diversity of aim, have had this in common, that the individual model has been made to conform to generic law, and that actual nature has been elevated by abstract standards. At a time when Europe from one end to the other is given over to *genre* painting, it is the proud distinction of Germany that she cherishes a company of artists who, as idealists, paint for the sake of an idea, and, as philosophers, are guided by governing principles.

German art has indeed a unity, as if a deep and unbroken stratum underlay the whole of Central Europe; and yet upon the surface crop up differences of outward conformation, which for a time divide Munich from Düsseldorf and Berlin from Vienna. Such differences, however, often result from accidents of the moment—from the influence, for example, of some man of commanding talent, such as Kaulbach or Piloty in Munich, Makart in Vienna, Bendemann or Lessing in Düsseldorf. And yet so constant is the interchange of professors and directors among the divers academies, that even the marked division between North and South Germany is in danger of being obliterated. However, the latest and largest easel picture by Bendemann, *The Departure of the Jews from their Captivity in Babylon,* still stands as a landmark, and serves as a relic of the past, to show the onward movement of young Germany. As contrasted with the manner and manipulation of Piloty, now dominant as we have seen in Southern Germany, this exponent of the opposite system is wanting in texture, realism, breadth in the masses, richness of colour, and concentration of light and shade. Such recondite art is like certain German music without form, it is confused in the intricacy of lines; and in shunning hackneyed melodies it affects discords. This school of painting claims as its privilege the exclusive right of being at once didactic and disagreeable. Such works have a fault common to German art; they are more of the nature of an internal thought than of an external thing; they partake of the character of a printed narrative rather than of a painted picture.

But in Northern Germany has come a reaction similar to the revolution already recounted in the Southern States. Professor Gustav Richter exhibits in Vienna a grand picture, *The Building of an Egyptian Pyramid,* which places Berlin on an equality with Munich. The moment chosen for this studious yet somewhat sensational composition is when the king and the queen have come to view the progress of the works; the pyramid, crowded with busy labourers, already rises high into the sky, and in the foreground are swarthy Nubians dragging a massive block of stone. The artist condescends to every trick of the brush and of the pallet-knife; in the foreground the pigments are plastered on in positive relief, and throughout the colours are forced up to florid excess. It is impossible for the recent reaction to be pushed further; indeed, so strong a manifestation is not unlikely to provoke a counter-reaction. What strikes me as a little strange is, that a work thus assailant has not more claim to originality: but this is an old complaint. A Frenchman generally strikes out something new, whereas a German hashes up old materials. German artists paint pictures eruditely, as German students edit classics or compile dictionaries; and the difference between Overbeck and a leader of the present reaction is, that while the one compiled from early masters the other steals wholesale from late masters.

There is little to report of fresco or water-glass painting, though the Maximillianeum in Munich, and works projected even in the distant capital of Pesth, afford pleasant proof that the Germans hold an unshaken faith in mural decoration. But perhaps it may be safely asserted that Germany of late has been more intent on the making of history than on the painting of history; at all events no other country has, within the last few years, furnished her artists with so plenteous a stock of paintable materials. And German battle-painters are certainly not slow to make the most of the late war; yet the old-established styles remain unchanged—Herren Adam, Brandt, Lange, Werner, and Gierymsky, have as heretofore a solid, stern, and stolid way of waging war upon canvas. Within the sphere of portraiture it is curious to observe the revolutions imposed by political events. Thus, in the Vienna Exhibition, we look in vain for Napoleon III., while, naturally, the favourites of the hour are Emperor Wilhelm, Prince

Bismarck, and General von Moltke. It is very long since we have seen a portrait better in modelling or more thorough in elaboration than that of *Moltke in seinem Arbeitzimmer zu Versailles*, by Professor Heyden of Berlin. But, for the most part, German portraits remain opaque or waxy in the flesh, crude in the colour of the draperies and background, and, like effigies in red sandstone, hard in cutting outlines.

Of *genre* painting there is little to say, save that the number of artists who now devote themselves to the delineation of domestic scenes is beyond all former experience. Thus in the Vienna Exhibition I noted for excellence no less than forty names, and were a census taken throughout Germany the number would be incredibly augmented. Still the want is felt of fresh talent. Thus foremost for ever appear Knaus, Salentin, Vautier, and Jordan. Yet in Professor Knaus Germany possesses the greatest *genre* painter in Europe. Herr Max, too, is another artist who cannot be lost in the crowd. He ranks among the rare painters—almost of necessity becoming rarer with each successive century—who, when nature would seem to have been all but used up by the endless device of artists, bring a fresh eye for beauties in nature hitherto veiled. In such reveries as *The Melancholy Nun*, the *Walpurgisnacht*, and *The Blind Girl in the Catacombs*, the spectator seems transported to a world of spirits and of shadows. A silvery moonlight takes the place of common day—we feel ourselves under the spell of an imagination which sleeps, and dreams, and anon awakes to madness.

Landscape-painting, like *genre*, is just now more prolific than inventive — in fact, the fundamental ideas promulgated by Professor Schirmer and others some half century ago have been pretty well worked out; and yet in Vienna I marked at least sixty artists who drudgingly are devoting their lives to the old formulas. But a change is coming over the landscape of Germany; for, just as in figure-painting the high historic has given place to the low domestic, so in landscape-art a high horizon is surrendered to lowlands. Formerly a painter of Munich or Düsseldorf invaded nine-tenths of his sky with snow mountains, the remaining one-tenth being reserved for a tempest, but now Herr Lier leads the way to green pastures and tranquil streams. The colouring, too, is as much transmuted as the composition. Instead of purple and black, quiet harmony is educed out of tender greys. Thus it will be understood that German and French landscape, long dissevered, are at last assimilating.

Austria, who in the arts as in politics for long represented stagnation, at last consents to move onwards. Conservatism is stirred by revolution, and mediocrity stimulated by genius. At least three men of distinguished talent have during the summer appeared in Vienna in astounding force. First in merit must be mentioned Hans Makart, who, after passing through the school of Professor Piloty in Munich, was induced some three or four years ago to turn his steps homewards. He established himself in a large studio in Vienna, hung with tapestries, and furnished with a luxury in keeping with the Orientalism to which his art inclined. The greater part of one side of this spacious apartment I have seen held by a vast composition, vying in dimension with the largest canvases in the Ducal Palace, Venice. The design was destined for the decoration of a ceiling; the style was florid, facile, even negligent. Perhaps I may be permitted to add, that on looking from the picture to the painter himself the discrepancy in comparative scale not unnaturally struck me. Instances might be adduced which would favour the conclusion that large pictures proceed from large men. Here, on the contrary, was an artist who in the presence of his own creation stood as Gulliver before giants. But it soon became apparent that the mind, though not the body, was commensurate with great achievements. In short, before quitting the studio, I felt that the artist was even greater than his work; that within him resided a power which had hitherto obtained no adequate manifestation. On returning to Vienna in the present year, my anticipations were fully realised by a composition, which for scale, dramatic disposition of figures, and Oriental splendour of colour, is scarcely behind the scenic compositions by Paul Veronese. Indeed the subject, *Venice doing Homage to Caterina Cornaro*, has evidently been chosen because admitting of the triumph of those elements which were supreme under Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret. The painter has enhanced the situation by all possible pomp and circumstance. The Queen-elect of Cyprus is raised on a daïs, as in *Venice*

Enthroned by Veronese, and at her feet are assembled all that the Republic can boast of in youth, beauty, or birth. The force and the affluence of pallet put forth is tremendous; the paint is in the lights loaded in solid impasto, while in the shadows the pigments are preserved in transparency. Makart here shows more power than Piloty, though less subtlety and delicacy. Indeed he is dashing and broad to excess, careless of detail, and sometimes even slovenly in drawing and modelling. But I incline to think that these are but faults of impatience and of impetuosity, and that Makart can, whenever he may be so minded, cast aside the trappings of the decorative artist, and assume the gravity and severity befitting a great historic painter.

The next artist whom I shall mention as a sign of the times is Jan Matejko, a Pole by birth, and still a resident in Cracow. The large composition exhibited last year at Kensington gave foretaste of that power, verging on extravagance, which becomes but too blatant in the eleven contributions which in Vienna throw all surrounding works into the shade. Jan Matejko, like much that is good in the Austrian revival, is a product of Munich; he is of the school of Piloty: yet, though thus an effect only, he becomes in turn a cause—a link, in fact, in that extended causation which fashions the art of nations. Indeed he asserts himself, as one of those geniuses who appear at rare intervals; he is an enthusiast, he paints as if he had a mission; his pictures seem to proclaim that upon his shoulders rests the burden of avenging his country's wrongs. His ideas burn in excess of passion; his figures seem ready to leap out from the canvas as he tells of the *Union of Poland under King Sigismund in* 1516, and of *Stefan Bathory, King of Poland, seeking Peace from the Russian Ambassadors.* And yet, perhaps, most of all was I impressed with this painter's portraits: they are powerful without extravagance, trenchant in character, yet supreme in art, negative in colour, yet full of colour. If I wished to judge fairly of the future of a young historic painter I should ask to be shown his portraits—under such a test Matejko comes off triumphantly.

The arts which have risen suddenly, somewhat unexpectedly, in Hungary, indicate that painters born on the Asiatic side of Austria are possessed by a fiery ardour, impelled by an erratic passion, and lighted by a hectic colour, which appear foreign to the races of Western Europe. In fact, the artists of Hungary tend, as do the Poles, to Orientalism; and it seems to me that the brightest promise for the close of the present century or the beginning of the next will be when the precision of form which pertains to Western nations shall be joined to the rhythm of line and the rapture of colour which inhere to Eastern races. Moritz Than, one of the most prolific painters in Europe, who in Pesth has executed some respectable frescoes, seems only to need more thorough training to win for Hungary a high and distinctive position. In like manner Michael Zichy, Hungarian by birth though Russian by adoption, had he not squandered in wilfulness and inconstancy rarest gifts might have blended into one the disunited arts of the East and of the West. Happily for the prospects of the future, all things promise that such amalgamation cannot be far distant.

Germany, in the Vienna Exhibition, presents so strong a front, that of the twenty competing nations France alone seriously assails her position. Belgium, as usual, takes a first rank, and yet stands in the rear of Germany. Italy, though only surpassed in the number of her pictorial contributions by Germany, France, and Austria, reaches to nothing higher than a good second class. Russia, England, Scandinavia, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, and Denmark, standing pretty much in this order of merit, occupy but subordinate places. German art, as already shown, does not surrender her national characteristics; contrasted with French art on the West and Italian on the South, she shows both weakness and strength. Compared with Italian, she wants the sense of beauty; and measured with French, she lacks spontaneity, lithesome play, sketchiness, and off-hand dash: in short, she is serious, solemn, and studious even to a fault. But, as we have seen, Germany has of late been mending her ways; and, after making all fair allowance for her faults, she remains noble in idea, fertile in conception, scientific in construction, profound in the reading of character, accurate in drawing, and solid in technique.

J. BEAVINGTON ATKINSON.

FROM RIGAUD TO REYNOLDS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

XVII.—BENJAMIN WEST (1738–1820); JAMES BARRY (1741–1806).

WE have partly seen, at previous stages of this interrupted survey, in what a degree high art filled the thoughts and drew to itself the ambitions of English painters in the last century. Of the men who owed affluence and reputation to their skill in portrait, Gainsborough nearly alone would seem to have been content with those conditions of demand for which his talent provided the supply. Others, in the midst of their success, were apt to condole with themselves as the martyrs of an unworthy age. Reynolds, indeed, was not the man to be rude to his generation, which found in his work a supply balancing with such perfect niceness its instinctive demand; yet in his desire of awakening the generation to other appetites, Reynolds was second to none. He used all his persuasion to foster an admiration for heroic and historical art, and all his authority to enjoin its production. He made practical excursions of his own, when he could spare time, into the province of history and the heroic. Romney, still more, was a man of such excursions; we have seen how, while he was all but the rival of Reynolds in the patronage of fashionable sitters, he loved to plan fancy pictures by the thousand, and how he actually began them by the hundred, and finished a proportion not quite insignificant either in number or desert. But among the votaries of high art who not only depreciated portrait-painting as an ambition, but abjured it as a livelihood, Fuseli is the only one of whom we have yet made any study. And in him we acquainted ourselves with an unconscious pioneer of the romantic spirit of modern Europe; we watched an eager masterful temper thrusting upon popular acceptance the sallies of an imagination usually fantastic and often vulgar, but always daring and abundant. Fuseli was in fact an illustrator-in-chief of romantic literature, with an imagination and a pencil as prone to the grotesque as to the sublime, and not least apt to hit the former mark when most aiming at the latter; impatient of nature, and, from imperfect early grounding in his craft, only just skilled enough to give his ideas an embodiment unfit for withstanding the effects of time. Upon the emoluments of his brush, to which were presently added those of the academic offices he owed to his book-knowledge and vigorous power of language, the lettered Swiss artist was able to live in moderate ease in his adopted country. Among his contemporaries, two alone were conspicuous as subsisting among us upon the fruit of their labours in regular high art. These were West, the discreet Quaker from Springfield, Massachusetts; and Barry, the intractable Irishman from Cork. It is common to associate with these the name of Copley, another guest from New England, as a third history painter of the reign of George III. But I omit Copley, because in fact he holds a somewhat different position. He is at least half a portrait-painter; and even his distinguishing form of history painting is itself half portrait: it is the painting, often in an admirable manner, of the events of his time in their proper aspect and costume. True, the example of this manner had been set by West himself, in his famous *Death of Wolfe:* but it was Copley who best and most industriously followed the example. The practice of West, on the other hand, but for his various portraits of the royal family, and for this exception of the *Death of Wolfe*, lay nearly altogether in the region of history academically so called. Whatever in sacred or profane record was most familiar in men's ears, and obvious to their apprehensions, furnished him with an incentive to his efforts; and it was his complacent aspiration to unite, to the honour of the civilisation and establishments of Great Britain, the most exalted lessons of religion and patriotism with the last perfections of pictorial sublimity. Let West and Barry, then, stand apart as the talents consecrated to provide their age with those forms of art for which it did not ask, and which it could with difficulty be persuaded to buy; although, the creations of high art once thrust upon the age, it was quite ready to be proud of them, and to congratulate itself on possessing in George III. a Magnifico and more, and on seeming to see the star of Buonarroti pale beside the art that flourished beneath the smiles of the house of Hanover.

It is to point no new moral, and with no new instance, when one speaks of the contrast between the immense esteem which West enjoyed during his life, and the immense oblivion by which his name was so soon overtaken. Poor ghosts—who, living, have felt themselves partakers of immortality, but dead, the praises suddenly fall still! how may they wonder and repine while no echo comes longer across the ninefold stream! What is it, then, which makes one age acclaim its artist as having achieved the highest of all triumphs, and the next age think of him, if at all, with the compassion due to mistaken ambitions? These things can only happen when art, or at least when art of the particular kind thus applauded and despised by turns, is not the expression of something spontaneous and native to its age, but the satisfaction of an artificial request, the fulfilment of an obligation and not of an impulse. In the eighteenth century, high art was a request in reality fostered only by the few who looked back upon the past, and would have it matched by the present. However much this request may have risen to the pitch of impulse, and even enthusiastic impulse, in the minds of one or two who tried to produce the high art, in the minds of those who admired what was produced, the request, the admiration, did not rise above the pitch of something obligatory and due. There was more of fashion than of nature in the applause. Now fashion will admire what seems respectably to fulfil the written and accepted conditions of the admirable; nature will look closer, and only admire what does really and with exactness correspond to her demands. Nature makes fewer æsthetic demands than fashion, but those few more exacting; a natural taste in art always criticises more sharply than an artificial taste. The taste for portraits in the last century was natural, and posterity has nothing to correct in the judgment passed upon Sir Joshua by his age; the taste for history was fashionable or artificial: such tastes are changeable as well as blunt; and from the appeal to posterity the shade of West turns disconsolate.

Indeed, to those judging by rule, and not having their observation sharpened by instinctive love of that which the art of West strove to be and was not, his success might well seem established. The line between is and is not, in such striving, is a narrow one. The nothing, which in art is everything, for it separates mediocrity from genius, can only be measured by apprehensions properly endowed; while almost everybody can apprehend the much, though in art that much is nothing, which distinguishes the mediocre above the imbecile. West was very far from being imbecile; but, alas! for us he might as well have been, since he was consummately mediocre. Look at the vast acres of his works at Windsor, or wherever else they are preserved, and you shall find nothing that charity will not pronounce almost creditable: he understands composition, he understands anatomy, he does not make mistakes in drawing, he studies colour; here are multitudes of figures of strong men and fair women in proper drapery, done at least as well as they could have been done by any celebrated master of the Roman Academy. But how inexpressibly tedious! how void! how null! how respectable, but after a little while how insufferable! All the Old Testament and most of the New—a colossal series of stained Bible illustrations for children, no better; the doughty deeds of Edward III.—another magnified series, as it were, of superior designs from a child's history of England; sets of portraits, and these last carrying, certainly, the stamp of sweetness proper to the time, and the charm in its women and children, but carrying them to a less degree than the work of many even of West's less famous contemporaries. For the energy of imagination which great subjects demand, we have a tranquil confidence in enterprise, and a contented routine of mechanical arrangement; for the steeled and concentrated powers of a master hand, we have the facile approximations of the ready apprentice; for noble or impassioned ideals of expression, we have masks from which the individuality of the model has been nearly emptied, with nothing added in its place; for sublimity we have dimension; for style, a general approximate correctness; copiousness for inspiration, the persuasion of genius for its possession, intention for performance, clay for gold.

West's life of eighty-two years was peacable; it was as correct and dignified as his art; and, like the art, had in its dignity something which, at the distance where we are, turns comical and a little pathetic. The Quaker house from which he sprang was of a good old English stock, settled in the colony half a century before his birth. That birth the painter, always somewhat of a Glendower beneath his meek exteriors, loved to recount as premature and portentous. The eloquence of a preacher had so overcome his mother that she brought forth before her time. The same preacher had watched his cradle, and foretold him a lofty destiny. In his early beginnings with the pencil, in the smoothing of his path by ready patrons, in the circumstances of his voyage as a young man to Italy, and the curiosity and acclamations that there attended him as the herald of the new and loftier culture that was to be upon those Western shores of freedom,—in these and all the courses of his life there was that which showed he was not of the roll of common men. It was in 1763, at the age of twenty-five, that the young prodigy of New England travelled from Italy to the mother country, at first with no purpose of making more than a mere passage. But here fortune opened her gates wide, and closed them behind her favourite. His pictures from Greek and Roman story were admired; his presence imposed with the appearance of genius, for his brows were lofty and his eyes flashing; and however this outward parade of nature's was belied in the proof by a somewhat plain intelligence and tedious discourse, nevertheless his discreet and compliant demeanour saved him from making such enemies as might have found it worth while to lay their hands too rudely upon the mask. And presently he had found patronage which was itself sufficient to stay all hands from such temerity. Before he had been four years in England the Archbishop of York had been his introducer to the King; and from that day forward West was painter-in-chief to George III. Outside the royal employment his commissions were comparatively few; but in the course of thirty-five years he earned from the King about as many thousand pounds,—by historical pictures and portraits, by the immense series on Revealed Religion in the New Chapel at Windsor, and by the Edward III. series in the state rooms of the Castle. On the death of Sir Joshua he was chosen President of the Royal Academy. One or two clouds, blown by the breath of sarcasm or envy, did late in his life disturb the lustre of his career in his own and the world's eyes; but they passed away; he did not outlive his fame. He died in 1820, his wife having gone before him after fifty years of faithful and kind companionship; and was buried with the pomps and honours due to Presidential place and a reputation unexhausted although upon the eve of its exhaustion.

West and Barry, I said, were the two painters besides Fuseli who subsisted, when George the Third was king, in independence of portrait-painting; and these two, unlike Fuseli, subsisted in independence no less of book-illustration. But subsistence is a different word when you use it of West and when you use it of Barry. In the case of West it means prosperity bordering upon wealth; in the case of Barry, privations contiguous with beggary. Allowing, as we shall have to allow, that the art of one and the other of these votaries of the sublime fell equally short of the aims with which it set out, we cannot but think with a more respectful compassion and a warmer kindliness of the ambition Fortune frowned on than of that on which she smiled. West with his amiable, unoffending ways—with his sixty years of public homage and no man gainsaying, only now and then an impatient sneer from Fuseli, who saw through him, and now and then a passing cabal in the Academy—West, after all, is not an example that shines very brightly by the side of Barry, for all the Irishman's mistaken measure of himself, for all his inaptitude in the art of living and nearly frantic spirit of contentiousness, for all the quarrels and scandals which at last expelled him from the society of his comrades, and almost from the countenance of his kind. The story is well known. Barry was the son of a small shipmaster at Cork, born about the same years as saw the birth of all the group of artists in

Great Britain with whom we have been concerned. He would not take to the sea; but displayed, without any teaching or example, a natural passion for drawing. As a mere boy he was occupied with heroic compositions from Scripture and the classics, and thus exhibits a type not only of his own, but of his century's great error and impediment in the pursuit of the higher forms of art. Enterprise outstrips preparation; patience, knowledge, and training lag hopelessly behind ambition; art builds her house upon the sand. Presently young Barry exhibits at Dublin a picture of the conversion of a King of Cashel by St. Patrick; and this was his first step to reputation. From this until his twenty-third year he lives and works at Dublin; and in the meanwhile comes in contact with the first spirit of his country, and finds in him the prince of friends. Edmund Burke, in nobility of honour and every private virtue among the worthiest of his age, in senatorial fire and dignity of public bearing the best, in extent and liberality of culture above the best, saw and conceived great hopes of Barry's future, sought his personal acquaintance, and from thenceforward was unwearied in serving him. He introduced the aspirant to employment, which was also education, under Athenian Stuart; and after a year provided him with means, such as were required by the stern frugality of the receiver of the bounty, for the journey to Rome and the residence there. At Rome Barry threw himself with indefatigable ardour into study, both of art and its literature; but, alas! with scarcely less vehemence into quarrels and hostilities. He could not see or imagine an abuse without rushing to the assault. Side by side with this bull's temper in practical life, he had an intelligence prone to put itself in postures of both reasonableness and docility: the bull gave himself out for a lamb. He would spend his time, and injure his prospects, with the most superfluous and furious onslaughts against the practices (reprehensible enough in fact) of the Roman dealers and cicerones; and then write to Burke an account of his conduct, such as reads in the last degree rational and mild. Burke's replies are masterpieces of wise advice and noble delicacy in candour. But all was of no avail; the most generous assiduity of friendship could make no change in Nature's composition.

There are some portraits of Barry which throw an interesting light on his character, as it must have really been on the one hand, and as at various times of his life he represented it to himself on the other. From the cast at the Society of Arts, and the admirable drawing prefixed to Dr. Fryer's 'Life,' we get a distinct conception of the temperament that brought upon itself so many disasters. There is the ambitious forehead, a laboratory not compact or strong enough for the thoughts which expand but oppress it; the eyes are intent, but with defiance not with calmness in their gaze; the nose belongs almost to a negro—to the baffled races that struggle and the world is too heavy for them; the high cheekbones threaten contention; the mouth and great lips are heavy with self-willed authority and uncontrolled discourse; the jaw, chin, and carriage of the head belong to stubbornness and self-assertion. Now Barry was not vain of his person, and spoke of himself as a 'hard-featured pock-pitted little fellow;' but in at least two of his portraits of himself the unconscious hand of the artist has let us into the secret of some illusions. In the well-known and commonly engraved full-face portrait done in early life, they are the illusions of an ambition full of hope; the regard of the artist's eyes is shown clear and untroubled, he is a true son of Apollo by the fine arch of his eyebrows; a harmony is introduced over all the features; the mouth is full of emotion and desire, but has not let itself go in the license of invective, nor learnt the eloquence of revolt. Look now at the melancholy portrait engraved by himself in mezzotint at an advanced age, and evidently in some hour of supreme dejection. This time he acknowledges himself baffled indeed and miserable; but again he effaces from his countenance the accusation of those qualities which went out to meet failure and solicit misfortune. He represents himself as wholly the victim. Beneath his thin hairs the forehead is still represented as stronger and more beautiful than it really was; the eyes rest tamed with adversity beneath brows upon which hostile experiences have pressed heavily; the mouth and lower face are free from all defiance, and could have done nothing, so they seem to plead, to provoke the chastisements which are written in those seams of haggard weariness and pitiful chagrin. It is Saturn, not Apollo, whose ascendant is asserted now.

For to this complexion had he come. Barry in his latter years was indeed as miserable, though not as unjustly miserable, as he here represents himself. He had stayed five years in Rome, learning and observing with the most robust assiduity, but failing to perfect himself with severe, delicate, and precise manual study. He was the first English artist who had devotedly, and with a devotion almost exclusive, attached himself to the Grecian antique, as the Grecian antique then existed for study in Italy. He perceived very clearly the wide difference between the antique and the work of the Renaissance schools of Florence and Rome; and having no historical appreciation of the Renaissance spirit and what that meant, he interpreted the difference as pure inferiority. So that on the whole he was inclined to break with Michelangelo and Raphael, and take as his watchword, 'the Venetians for painting, the Greeks for style and design.' For six years after his return to England he exhibited, with varying applause and just sufficient patronage to keep body and soul together, a series of pictures aiming at the classical ideal. He also published his argument against Winckelmann, full of crotchety knowledge and the confusion of just with unjust observations. This and his other writings and lectures, only interesting now for the phase of culture which they exhibit and the individual temperament which they serve to illustrate, show Barry, across his violences and polemics, to have been fairly second to Fuseli, and second to none but him, in solidity of professional knowledge and reflection. Meanwhile his temper was becoming embittered by the scanty recognition that he won; he abused those whose ambitions he thought meaner than his own; he quarrelled with Reynolds, no easy matter; for a moment he was even on the verge of a quarrel with Burke; he fell into the ways of a recluse and one who found the world no friend. All the while, his life was one of blameless honour and resolute, nay cynical, self-denial in poverty. Then came the famous Adelphi undertaking, following upon the failure of a combined scheme for a still greater undertaking in St. Paul's. For six years Barry laboured like a Titan at his almost unrewarded task in the great room of the Society of Arts; living upon the produce of prints which he executed, in his rough impetuous manner of engraving, in hours taken from his rest; but having this consolation for his hardships, that his genius had now at any rate the room and the occasion, so long denied, to expatiate as it desired. Who looks now at those spacious works, the encyclopædia of their painter's powers, and to some extent also of his age's historical culture? The most curious thing is to note how absolutely this Grecian enthusiast fails to revive any semblance of the Greek spirit; whatever power his pieces have, in the guardian and avenging angels of the *Retribution* scene and such-like matters, is essentially Gothic, grotesque, and barbarous. What, again, can be less Greek than Orpheus, kicking with inspiration, for it is kicking and nothing else, in the opening picture? By far the best division of the series, the only one which for us does not fall on the worse side of zero in artistic merit, is that of the distribution of the Society's prizes; in which the despised element of portrait, to posterity so justly valuable, is undisturbed by the boasted elements of allegory and the antique, which posterity finds so questionably imagined and executed with such an uncertain hand. The scrap we give is from one of Barry's own engravings of the principal picture, where with a quaint helplessness the historical portraits of heroes of all ages are grouped in embarrassed conversation on the fields of Elysium. Here it is William Penn reading to Lycurgus and Alfred the Great the famous code of laws, which the artist presently discovering to be not of Penn's but of Lord Baltimore's first drafting, executed a new engraving to correct his error.

The record of Barry's life after the conclusion of these works in 1783 is full of many bitternesses and few consolations. He gained by the Adelphi pictures some excessive and some moderate admiration, but no solid rewards worth speaking of. He was made Professor of Painting in the Royal Academy; but after fifteen years the violence of his denunciations against brother-artists procured his expulsion not only from the chair but from the Society. With Reynolds he had reconciled himself in time; and on his death paid an honourable tribute to his genius. Out of his scanty means, Barry continued to save; but he lost his economies in a burglary. He meditated, and occasionally executed, more paintings on a grand style. Poverty and contention were his companions. At last the activity of a dilettante nobleman of Scotland had procured him a competent annuity; when he was seized with a pleurisy, which unlucky circumstances conspired to aggravate, and of which, after lingering a little while, he died at the age of sixty-five.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

THE THREE CATHEDRALS DEDICATED TO ST. PAUL.*

FOURTH NOTICE.

WE hinted in the last number that the best and only legitimate mode of turning to account the desire of the public to 'complete' St. Paul's should be one which aimed at the general improvement of the position of the public towards the decorative arts critically, and at an enlarged experience on the part of those employed in their design and execution. It only remains to indicate a method by which these aims might be accomplished, and this, we are told, must be done as briefly as possible.

The first point to insure is that no modification of the present building of an essentially permanent character be undertaken so long as any one method of removeable decoration remains unexhausted. Thus the use of coloured washes should precede any attempt at mosaic decoration, and both should precede one of the proposed methods of completion of which much has been heard, the substitution namely of coloured marble for the stone pilasters of the interior. It is obvious that the introduction of stained glass should precede all attempts at coloured decoration, since the value of wall-painting is necessarily modified by the transmitted colour.

So much of experimental caution is possible if the Dean and Chapter are determined at once to set to work upon the Cathedral itself; but surely some small degree of the heart-sickness consequent upon hope deferred is preferable to the reckless selection of St. Paul's as the *vile corpus* on which decorative experiments are to be tried.

At this point a passage from a well-known *opéra bouffe* occurs to us as suggestive In it one of the characters asks to be made a village schoolmaster. He is asked, '*Est-ce que vous savez lire?*' and answers most judiciously, '*Non, mais c'est pour apprendre.*' Having already attributed to Mr. Burges a remarkable proficiency in the decorative arts we shall not fear to be misunderstood or to be thought to question his right to be the director of the undertaking. So far at least is he unlike the applicant for the position above alluded to. But as competent teachers may be themselves learners too and as it is only necessary that a proper interval be preserved between the relative attainments of teachers and pupils, why should not our metaphor be so far applied that, admitting to the full the superiority of the teacher's knowledge and his right to his position, we should at the same time recognise the advantage which would be gained if both should wait to make some steps of further progress before they entered on their respective spheres of action—the one to execute, the others to judge and appreciate?

To come to details, we would suggest some such scheme as this. Let the interest of the money so far subscribed, which must be considerable, be entrusted to Mr. Burges to employ as far as it will go, first towards the formation of an executive school of decorators and secondly towards the actual decoration of certain buildings of less size and importance than

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* A History of the Three Cathedrals dedicated to St. Paul in London, with reference chiefly to their Structure and Architecture, and the Sources whence the necessary Funds were derived. By William Longman, F.S.A. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1873.

St. Paul's. This scheme, if properly arranged, might give the architect a graduated series of experiments, each successively superior in scope and in importance, in which many of the practical problems which must occur in any scheme of decoration might be practically solved. The study of them would develope in the public a true critical standard of decorative art, which at the present moment is utterly wanting and in the absence of which no art ever truly flourished; meanwhile studies for the decoration of the Cathedral might be made, and the scheme gradually matured in the light of these experimental undertakings. Not only would the capital at present at the disposal of the Committee continue undiminished, but as the confidence of the public was gained fresh funds would be contributed, and should the final experiment, which might well be the decoration of one of Wren's best City churches, prove, as we might hope, an admitted success, then the final undertaking would be set on foot under the most favourable conditions conceivable; not as now scarcely floated on the slack tide of a past enthusiasm in the darkness of critical ignorance and anarchy, but carried to completion on the full confidence implied by prior undertakings successfully accomplished, of problems experimentally solved, of intentions adequately matured; and in the full light of educated and accomplished criticism. By such a scheme as this not only might St. Paul's be made the pride, as it now is the disgrace of England, but the practice and appreciation of the decorative arts might once again be permanently and surely established.

BASIL CHAMPNEYS.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the life of men who work in great centres of population, and see nothing of the sylvan world except what may happen to have been planted in a plot of ground which they dignify with the name of a garden—a few gardeners' plants so altered from the Divine ideal as to be unrecognisable, and so arranged as to be entirely without that charm of unexpected surprises which is the great source of interest in nature—there will often occur a sudden awakening, about the beginning of June, to the fact that the world has somehow painted itself green again, with touches of white, and crimson, and blue. In such lives as these the spring is often simply omitted, unless from time to time some breath of vernal mildness may reach them across the barrenness of the brick wilderness they live in. It happened to me once to be confined by urgent business during the spring season in the heart of a great English city, in which there were no green boulevards or avenues, and whose only refreshment in that kind was a park that had been recently purchased by the common council, far outside in the suburbs. After many delays my business came to an end, and I fled at once to a little corner in the country that was frequented only by artists and anglers—a clean little inn by a river well shaded by ancient trees. We had got to the middle of June and I had not seen a leaf or a flower; or if my eyes had seen one, the mind had not perceived it in the midst of wearing anxieties. When, therefore, this sudden leisure came upon me, in the glorious birth of summer, I felt the transition like the change from Purgatory to Paradise. No summer ever seemed to me so wonderful as that did. Every leaf was a marvel, every flower was a delight; I lay down in depths of dewy grass, and watched the pure sunshine streaming through the perfect young leaves till they softened it to a quiet green light all around me, that seemed at once to strengthen my jaded eyes and soothe them. Three days afterwards the marvel had passed away, but the recollection of it has ever since remained with me, and explains for me the delight of the citizen in green leaves, and the intensity of sensation about nature which we find in poets who were bred in towns; whilst those who have lived much in the country, though they know and observe more, seem to feel more equably, and to go to nature with less of sensuous thirst and excitement. Exactly the same difference may be observed between horses which have daily access to the pasture, and those which, after being kept in stables during a prolonged town season, are sent to grass in summer. The former will conduct themselves reasonably when the released prisoners of the town-stable will indulge in the most extravagant demonstrations. There is in men and animals a natural thirst for summer that begins to agitate them about the month of March, and if they live in rural freedom the advance of spring very gradually satisfies this craving, like slow-dropping rain on a parched land; but if they pass into summer suddenly, and omit the spring from their experience, then the change is like the arrival of thirsty camels on the bank of the abounding Nile. Yet, although there is a deep delight in thus bathing ourselves in the full rich green of summer, when we have longed for it many a day, I like better the slow increase of satisfaction that the spring-time hourly brings to us, however parsimoniously, and I would not in exchange for months of what is commonly reputed to be pleasure, miss the sight of the first leaves on the willow and the scent of the violets where they grow.

I remember a boy who for many months, even for years, suffered agonies from a disease which was perhaps even the more terrible that there was no hope of release by death, and one day, after he had been in bed so long and had suffered so much that he had lost his reckoning of time, his mother brought him a great full-blown rose that filled all the chamber with its fragrance. The lad took the flower very eagerly, and after almost burying his face in the soft and perfumed petals, turned wonderingly to the giver and said, 'Is it summer now, dear mother?' He, poor fellow, had missed his spring altogether, and missed it doubly, for the spring of his life was passed on a couch of suffering, amidst odours of medicines, visits of grave-faced doctors, and a weariness almost without hope.

Happier in this, at least, at the Val St. Véronique we were out every day from the very beginning of the new season, and watched the slow brightening of it like a dawn. Where, in early March, will you find a plant already in the fullest pride of all its greenery, not yet in flower it is true, but in leaf abundantly? The water precedes the land in the contest for spring primers, and our finest streams are full of the water-ranunculus, waving in the shallows like long green hair—the richest of all greens, certainly, though it might be treason to some paler and fairer land plants to affirm that it is also the loveliest. The water at this time is quite clear and abundant, and very swift in those depths of two or three feet where the ranunculus is happiest; so that all the fine linear segments of its subaqueous leaves, the only ones yet developed, are washed by millions of gallons of pure water every day of their lives, and kept so exquisitely clean that no fragment of earth can ever adhere to them for an instant. It is very different later in the year, as we shall see when the time comes, but the plant is never so lovely as it is now, even when its flowers are all out in the sunshine and it has two sorts of leaves to boast of. I thought sometimes as I watched it waving so unweariedly with the motion that the current gave it, and flashing dark emerald from one end to the other like the scales of some swiftly-gliding serpent, that it seemed to have more than simply vegetable life, and to be a water-spirit tied fast in the stream's path and seeking relief in ineffectual struggles. Strangely enough, one of my horses came exactly to the same conclusion; for as I was riding him across the river at a ford down in the plain, where the stream had a certain width and a depth of two feet or thereabouts, he saw the green ranunculus waving in the clear current, and being at once persuaded that it was some living creature likely to do him bodily harm, became frantic with fright, and bolted with me down the stream's bed till he got into a deep pool, where the necessity for swimming brought him to his senses again. I do not know whether artists have ever cared much for this plant, but it adds infinitely to the beauty of some rivers at this early time of the year, the effect of the waving various green through the lightly-rippling transparent water being a beautiful variety in the otherwise rather monotonous topaz of river-sands.

Alexis and I quitted our retreat amongst the hills for an excursion in the low country to see the opening of the spring season, which occurs about a fortnight earlier there. The plain was rich in trees and foreground plants that were not so common in our forests, and the most conspicuous of these, at this time of the year, were the willows. During a walk of a few miles we found half a dozen varieties, the most frequent and most effective near the rivers being the purple willow, whose thin red stems, all speckled with young shoots of pale green, were brilliant in the first spring sunshine. Then there was the sallow-willow, with its soft white downy blossoms, and the brilliant silver of the osier changing so beautifully, according to the direction in which you look at it; for if you look in the direction of the down it is silvery, but if against it, then you see a delicate grey purple. This purple reddens later as the anthers become visible, and finally turns to golden yellow with pollen, but the yellow is beautifully moderated by being always on a grey ground. Hardly anything in nature is more lovely than the round-eared willow in full blossom, especially the glory of the male tree, with the mingled greenish gold on its flowers, where the anthers make a sort of light golden filigree on a ground of tender green. The female tree is much less splendid, but her pale flowers are pleasant as young foliage is, with their soft greyish verdure on which lies no dust of gold. A little later in the season the common white willow is sufficiently leaved to show a delicate green bloom in the distance when caught by the sun, but when the sun is clouded the bloom seems to disappear, and in certain positions relatively to the light the green will be scarcely, if at all, visible. This adds much to the liveliness and variety of the spring landscape, as the colour comes and goes under the sunshine and cloud, adding greatly to our sense of motion and change in nature—a sense that some artists have had in great strength, and even expressed verbally, which is rare with them. There is nothing prettier in the natural landscape than the appearance, and vanishing, and sudden reappearance of the fresh young green on willows, at a distance, as the light touches or abandons them. We have something of the same kind, but more sublime, in the evanescence and reappearance of crags or knolls on the sides of all noble mountains, whose structure can never be quite accurately ascertained unless you can make models of them by tedious surveys, and which cheat us and amuse us by endless alterations and disguises. I wonder how it is that so cheerful-looking a tree as the willow should ever have become associated with ideas of sadness. Yet the association was established by the great poets long ago, and must have been found by them already in the popular mind. It is especially connected with unhappiness in love, and unhappiness on the side of the woman when neglected and forsaken. So Desdemona says,—

> 'My mother had a maid called Barbara:
> She was in love; and he she loved proved mad,
> And did forsake her: she had a song of "willow"—
> And old thing 'twas, *but it expressed her fortune*,
> And she died singing it.'

Then Desdemona sings Barbara's song, with the refrain,—

> 'Sing willow, willow, willow;
> *Sing all a green willow must be my garland.*'

And in 'Hamlet,' when Shakespeare wishes to give a poetical melancholy to the brook where Ophelia was drowned, he introduces a willow in the very beginning of the Queen's description, so that the word occurs in the first verse, and is the first substantive in the verse:—

> '*There is a willow grows aslant a brook,*
> *That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;*
> There with fantastic garlands did she come
> Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
> That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
> But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
> There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
> Clambering to hang, an envious silver broke;
> When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
> Fell in the weeping brook.'

This association seems the more curious that the willow is one of the lightest, liveliest, and most cheerful-looking of all the trees that grow. There is nothing funereal about its leaves either in form or colour, and they play in the wind like butterflies. See how well the tree comes in when Tennyson uses it in the pleasant allegro overture to the 'Lady of Shalott':—

> 'Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
> Little breezes dusk and shiver,
> Through the wave that runs for ever
> By the island in the river
> Flowing down to Camelot.'

And how sweetly and cheerfully the willow occurs to Virgil's mind in connexion with a passage of pure congratulation, as a tree whose flowers would be haunted by the bees of Hybla:—

> 'Fortunate senex! hîc, inter flumina nota
> Et fontes sacros, frigus captabis opacum!
> Hinc, tibi, quæ semper vicino ab limite sepes
> Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicti
> Sæpe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro.'

But what an advantage the English poets have over all others in the melody of that sweet word 'willow!' How beautifully it takes its place in verse—so beautifully that the mere repetition of it is music in itself.

> 'Sing willow, willow, willow.'

Virgil was not nearly so fortunate as Shakespeare in this respect, for *salictum* is a word which can never have any beauty of sound, though it may be made, of course, to fit neatly into a Latin hexameter; neither is *salix* any better for euphony. And even the great softening process which Latin underwent before it was moulded into other languages has not very much improved the word for poetry. *Salce* and *salcio* are both harsh; and *saule,* though softer, is far inferior to willow for syllabic melody. Here it is, for example: the word occurs in some fine lines of Lamartine, but the adjective which follows it is immeasurably more important in the structure of the verse:—

> 'Là, contre la fureur de l'aquilon rapide
> Le saule caverneux nous prêtait son tronc vide,
> Et j'écoutais siffler dans son feuillage mort
> Des brises dont mon âme a retenu l'accord.'

Although there is nothing at this early season which shows from a distance like the willow, whose silvery catkins and tiny nascent leafage have really an importance even in the general landscape, still the foreground is beginning to decorate itself with leaves that count for something, even before they are fully grown or accompanied by their sweet sisters—the flowers. The very tardiness of some plants gives greater consequence to those which precede them by a few weeks; for instance, the honeysuckle is a more important hedge-plant in March than it is two months later; for when the hedges are bare of everything but a few incipient buds of thorn, or wide-apart scattered little leaves of eglantine, it is a great thing to find the soft, rather dark-green leaves of honeysuckle quite rich and abundant, so much more abundant as it seems to us than even in the height of summer, when they are lost in the general profusion, and only the flowers attract us by their colour or their perfume. So by the edges of streams, although the yellow iris is a fine attractive plant at all times when it is visible, and most especially so when it displays its regal flowers, still one welcomes it in March with a new sense of its value when the young pale-green blades stand straight out of the water, their points about six inches above the surface. There is, in truth, plenty to be seen in the young vegetation of the foreground, and there are more leaves everywhere than we think; but most of them are so small yet that they escape attention individually, and only please the eye in the mass by a general sense of reviving greenness. So it is with the tiny green leaves of furze, an innumerable multitude, which as yet, however, seem less numerous than its thorns. And there are plants which will be of great size and splendour in their maturity, and which have already quite a mature look on a much smaller scale, so that any one who did not know them would think they were satisfactory enough already. The young soapwort is an example of this; few young plants are better worth drawing, for the leaves take curves almost as good as those of fine naturally-dried leafage, and there is an interesting transition of colour from the fresh green of the well-formed leaves down to purple near the root. Other plants, which will never reach any great height or size, are of consequence, because their leaves, though few in number, and close to the ground, happen to be relatively of rather large dimensions; such a plant is the arum which is often visible now in damp nooks with more than a mere promise of verdure yet to come.

I have said something about the beauty of the English word *Willow*. Other plants are less happy in their English names, and more fortunate in the names that have been given them by other nations. For example, there is that charming little spring flower which is called in Latin the *Vinca*, or *Pervinca*, because it is supposed to conquer (vincere, pervincere) either the frosts of winter or some malady, whichever it may be, for etymologists suggest both explanations. And now for the changes that we have made in the Latin name. The Italians, to begin with, have been in this instance singularly conservative, and they call the flower *pervinca* still; but the French have softened the word, and made it more beautiful by changing it into *pervenche*. How sweetly it occurs in the following verses, addressed by a poet to a young lady who had captivated his admiration!—

> 'Je voudrais être la pervenche,
>   Qui joue avec tes noirs cheveux,
> Ou ton beau miroir qui se penche,
>   Quand sur lui tu mires tes yeux.'

The English, on their part, have also deviated from the Latin, but not, I think, with so happy a result. They have changed *pervinca* into *periwinkle*, and I submit that it is simply impossible to write about this flower in sentences worthy of its charm and beauty when you have to introduce such a barbarous word as that.* A poetical lover might wish to be a violet or a rose, but he would never, in written verse, have the temerity to wish he was a periwinkle.

Early spring is not the season of the most brilliant contrasts; but they occur occasionally, and may be briefly alluded to in passing. You have the viburnum, for instance, which in the late winter is so splendid in its innumerable berries, with their jewel-like transparent red. In early spring a good many of these berries remain, and though their splendour is rather dimmed and faded by this time in reality, it seems to be revived by the effect of contrast, for the fresh green leaves have sprouted amongst them. Another little tree, whose foliage sprouts about the same time, is the spindle-tree, or *fusain*, which one can never see without thinking of its two very opposite uses. The charcoal from it is, it appears, especially approved for the manufacture of the powder used in cannons, whilst at the same time artists prefer it for charcoal-drawing. Both these two things—cannon powder and charcoal-drawing—have been immensely improved of late years, so war and art, barbarism and civilisation, go on together yet as they did in old Greece, in old Rome, in the Europe of the Middle Ages, and in the time of the great Renaissance.

The mere precedence of flower before leaf, or leaf before flower, is in itself quite sufficient to ensure variety in the early aspects of vegetation. It is illustrated by many plants which might be paired together in this connexion as examples; but it is enough to mention two of the commonest and best known, the hawthorn and the blackthorn. The leaves of the hawthorn will be all sprouting over it abundantly and rapidly covering the hedge with their fresh light-green, probably rather intensified by the contrast of a few old haws that may linger yet from winter; whilst, at the same time, the blackthorn will just begin to be abundantly dotted with little white buds which, here and there, are bursting into flower, the leaf-buds meanwhile, though contemporaneous, being of no visible importance, mere points compared with the flower-buds. If the blackthorn were often an isolated plant it would scarcely, in early spring, be a cheerful-looking one, notwithstanding its abundant efflorescence, for the eye desires a little green amidst so much white and black; but, as it very frequently happens that the hawthorn is not far off, this defect is fully compensated by the green and leafy neighbour. Besides this, in our scenery at least, you are never very far from an oak, and last year's leaves still remain very abundantly, offering another contrast which is not, I think, always quite harmonious or agreeable, but which, at any rate, is a variety.

P. G. HAMERTON.

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* I suppose the change must have come gradually, and through the form *pervinke*, which Chaucer uses.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XXIII.—MAXIME LALANNE.

Weymouth Bay, after Constable.

THE fashion of making etchings from pictures, which has set in so strongly during the last two or three years, had drawn M. Lalanne into this new practice before we asked him to etch Constable's *Weymouth Bay* for the PORTFOLIO. It has been necessary, in order to succeed in this department of the art, that M. Lalanne should in some degree modify his earlier system of work, especially by a closer study of tone, and fuller rendering of it; but this he appears to have done with the facility of self-adaptation which often rather surprises us in artists who seem to have acquired a fixed and decided manner. Some of M. Lalanne's etchings from pictures in the 'Gazette des Beaux Arts,' especially those after Troyon and Ruysdael, showed that he was already quite at home in the interpretation of those qualities which belong to oil-painting.

Constable was led to paint *Osmington Shore, near Weymouth,* by his friendship for Archdeacon Fisher, who lived at Osmington, and was always delighted to receive the painter there. It was from Osmington, on the 27th of August, 1816, that Mr. Fisher declared his readiness to perform the ceremony which was to unite John Constable and Maria Bicknell in that state of matrimony which for so long had seemed almost hopeless for both of them. 'My dear Constable, I am not a great letter-writer, and when I take pen in hand I generally come to the point at once. I therefore write to tell you, that I intend to be in London on Tuesday evening, the 24th, and on Wednesday shall hold myself ready and happy to marry you. There, you see, I have used no round-about phrases; but said the thing at once, in good plain English. So, do you follow my example, and get you to your lady, and instead of blundering out long sentences about "the Hymeneal altar," &c., say that on Wednesday, Sept. 25th, you are ready to marry her. If she replies, like a sensible woman, as I suspect she is, "Well, John, here is my hand, I am ready——," all well and good. If she says, "Yes, but another day will be more convenient," let her name it, and I am at her service. And now, my dear fellow, I have another point to settle. And that I may gain it, I shall put it in the shape of a request. It is, that if you find upon your marriage your purse is strong enough to make a bit of a *détour*, I shall reckon it a great pleasure if you and your bride will come and stay some time with my wife and me. That lady joins with me in my request. The country here is wonderfully wild and sublime, and well worth a painter's visit. My house commands a singularly beautiful view, and you may study from your very window. You shall have a plate set by the side of your easel, without your sitting down to dinner. We never see company, and I have brushes, paints, and canvas in abundance.'

Constable was married on the 2nd of October, 1816, and the pair accepted Mr. Fisher's invitation to Osmington. Weymouth Bay must have impressed him on this visit, for he painted it between that date and the year 1819, when it was exhibited at the British Gallery. It was in the same year that Constable exhibited at the Royal Academy the *Scene on the River Stour*, so well known as the famous *White Horse Constable.* Leslie says that in his opinion 'Constable's art was never more perfect, perhaps never so perfect, as at this period of his life.' He was in fact, at that time, a little more than forty years old, which is just the time of maturity in an artist; and as Constable had studied quite in an original manner, looking at nature with his own eyes, it had taken him some time to form his style, which had now fully developed itself.

In the year 1811, when West's picture of *Christ Healing the Sick* was purchased by the Directors of the British Institution for 3000*l.*, Constable's mother, who preferred (in which perhaps she may have been not very far wrong) the principal figure and infant in her son's Brantham altar-piece, said to him in a letter: 'In truth, my dear John, though in all human probability my head will be laid low long ere it comes to pass, yet with my present light I can perceive no reason why you should not, one day, with diligence and attention, be the performer of a picture worth 3000*l.*' The time foreseen as possible by Constable's mother has now arrived, and it is to be regretted that she could not be positively assured of it during her lifetime, for as Mr. Wilson gave 2200*l.* for *Weymouth Bay*, in order to present it to the Louvre, it may be presumed that if one of his largest and most famous pictures came into the market it would easily rise to the 3000*l.* of which Mrs. Constable permitted herself to dream as a possibility.

We cannot conclude a notice of this recent addition to the Louvre without expressing our hearty admiration for the noble spirit with which Mr. Wilson has determined that English landscape-painting should, by a picture of Constable, be worthily represented in the great French collection. The intense and absurd spirit of international ill-will that for so many years has in Paris systematically denied the existence of an English school of painting, and shut the doors of the Louvre against every Englishman (unless, like Bonnington, he practised his art in France, and so might be classed in the French school), has for some years past been considerably on the decline; an improvement which is due partly to greater facilities for travel, and partly also to the influence of the 'Gazette des Beaux Arts,' which has done much to make our school known as one of the schools of Europe. Still the French Government is only just timidly beginning to think of purchasing English art in a very small way, and this example of Mr. Wilson's may accelerate the movement. I believe that the fashion of picture-buying in France is gradually turning towards England, and that twenty years hence our great masters will be as regularly sold in Paris as the Dutch masters are to-day. Mere fashion has a great deal to do with picture-buying, but it may be in some measure guided or directed; and it may be hoped that so good an example as that of Mr. Wilson will lead it in a right direction.

P. G. HAMERTON.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF GERMANY IN CONTEMPORARY ART.

II.

GERMANY has been for two generations so busy in the making of statues that the traveller now finds her chief cities pleasantly peopled with the illustrious dead. Berlin has an equestrian statue of the great Frederick, besides more fancy figures, such as the 'Fighting Amazon.' The streets of Munich are adorned with monuments to King Max Joseph, Ludwig I., Goethe, Schiller, and Schelling; the tympanum of the Glyptothek is filled with sculpturesque groups, the niches are occupied with figures of Pericles, Phidias, and Hadrian, of Vulcan, Dædalus, and Prometheus; and then leaving the city for the rising ground in the suburbs, crowned by the Ruhmeshalle, we are met by the colossal statue of 'Bavaria,' standing in front of a Doric colonnade, which affords shelter to the busts of about eighty Bavarian notabilities. Neither must be forgotten the Grecian temple, planted on a promontory, and presiding almost as a personality over the sylvan solitude of the Danube. In silence, as sacred to the dead, rises the Walhalla, a thing of beauty—the dedication of the arts of architecture and of sculpture to the genius of humanity. The north and south pediments are occupied with plastic compositions, while the interior is populous with historic personages. The Sanctum, sustained by magnificent monoliths from Salzburg, is still vacant; a colossal statue of King Ludwig remains to be added, as the presiding genius of the spot. This enumeration, which must necessarily remain far from complete, may close with curt mention of scattered works, such as the noble figure of Albert Dürer in Nuremberg, the equestrian statue of Prince Schwarzenberg in Vienna, the statue of Charles IV., the monument of Francis I., and the Radetzky monument, severally in Prague; sundry statues to Guttenberg and other printers, countless replicas of Goethe and Schiller, scattered about Munich, Mayence, Frankfort, and other towns, with effigies set up to Luther and other reformers in Worms. To these portrait statues may be added a multitude of works sacred and profane—figures of Christ and of the Virgin Mary, of Hagar and Ishmael, of Ariadne on the panther, of Nymphs at a fountain, of Victories, allegories of the Virtues, &c. The sculptors to whom Germany has been indebted for these countless creations are some well known, others little known. The names of Rauch, Schwanthaler, Rietschel, Dannecker, and Kiss, are familiar even to the untravelled Englishman; but perhaps Germans only can discriminate the distinctive differences between Hähnel, Em. Max, Jos. Max, Engel, Begas, Drake, Wolff, Wagner, Schmidgruber, Malfatti, Dausch, Miller, Wagmüller, and Wittig. Yet all these sculptors and many others have an ascertained position by well-accredited works set up in German capitals, or sent to divers International Exhibitions. This somewhat wearisome recital will, I think, serve more than sufficiently to sustain the assertion that Germany has been prolific in plastic art. I will now endeavour to determine the position she has won for herself in the contemporary art of Europe.

The modern sculpture of Germany, for reasons at first sight not easily understood, compares to disadvantage with the recent pictorial revivals which I had the pleasure of recounting last month. It is, in fact, the misfortune of German sculpture to have remained stationary, while the sister arts of painting and of architecture have been progressive. It is well known that early in the present century, Overbeck, Cornelius, and Veit, led the revolt against the dead conventionalism, eclecticism, and pseudo-Italianism represented by Raphael Mengs and Angelica Kaufmann; but, strange to say, this striving after early simplicity, this aspiration for sanctity and spiritualism, found no response in the art of sculpture. The voice of the prophets was heard crying in the wilderness and in the market-place, but no echo was caught by the marble hills of Carrara. The gods of Greece and of old Rome found in modern Italy and in Germany some sufficiently comfortable and capacious Olympus; but the God of the Mount of Transfiguration did not stand enthroned or glorified within a church or before an altar. It is certainly an anomaly that the signal manifestation of the spirit of Christianity seen in pictorial compositions within the churches of Munich, Spires, and Remagen, finds little or no reciprocity in plastic form. I can recall neither in Rome, Munich, Düsseldorf, Dresden, nor Vienna, any sculptor who could pass as a worthy disciple of Overbeck. Neither has any one arisen as the *confrère* of Cornelius, to impress upon marble the grandeur and the powers of Michael Angelo. Dannecker's 'Christ' existing in Ratisbon, also in replica in Russia, is a poor piece of debility and affectation; and certain Christian compositions I have seen in Rome, and more recently in Vienna, such as Madonnas and Pietàs, are little better than feeble compilations. It is true that the group of 'Hagar and Ishmael,' by Professor Wittig of Berlin, which drew the attention of all truth-seeking artists when exhibited in Munich and Vienna, has a sharp, decisive modelling, and a searching insight into character, which might give promise of future rescue for religious sculpture from its besetting bane of insipidity. Still such touches of nature are as yet but a distant prospect, inasmuch as the naturalism which has of late transformed the art of painting remains still far off from sculpture. In fact, not one of the great successive movements which have wrought revolutions in painting have made themselves felt in the plastic arts. Not only do we look in vain for the Overbeck or the Cornelius of sculpture, but, what is almost worse, neither Kaulbach, Piloty, nor Knaus, have met with fellow-workers who could transmute into stone the living and ever-changeful spirit of the age. Modern sculpture is, in fact, in Germany, divorced from modern life and progressive thought. Lessing has written his 'Laocoon,' Kant and others have developed the doctrine of 'the Infinite,' Schiller has penned his æsthetic letters, even theologians have ventured out of the beaten track, and yet sculptors ever stick in the old ruts, and refuse to move onwards, under the impotent plea of *non possumus*.

The living sculptors of Germany, in common with their contemporaries in France, England, and Russia, have unhappily dissevered themselves from their historic ancestry, and cut themselves off from their legitimate inheritance. Indeed, throughout modern Europe the sculptors of Italy alone preserve an unbroken national pedigree, while their neighbours across the Alps have bartered away their birthright. The national rights which the sculptors of Germany have surrendered must be patent to every one familiar with the ancient works in stone and in metal within the churches of Hildesheim, Nuremberg, Munich, and Innspruck. In the Cathedral and in St. Michael's Church at Hildesheim, are Romanesque, Byzantine, and Early Gothic sculptures, which might serve as a solid historic basis for a modern style studious of severity, dignity, and monumental symmetry. In Munich and in Innspruck are tombs guarded by bronze statues, which for individual portraiture, life-like presence, and richly-wrought robes, reduce modern figures to weak shadows and vague generalities. In Nuremberg I need scarcely point to well-known carvings in stone and in wood, and castings in bronze; and I cannot but deem it a little humiliating to Germany, that while her sculptors have been emulous of Canova, they have been utterly unmindful of Adam Kraft, Veit Stoss, Albert Dürer, and Peter Vischer. In striking contrast, France, freeing herself from Italian servility, has revived, yet in a spirit of independence, schools which have been native to her soil. I look in vain throughout Germany for a parallel to Chevalier Montagny's 'St. Louis,' a figure devout and spiritual, yet without weakness—a work which carries the mind back to earnest and profound periods in Gothic arts. The 'Pietà,' by Achtermann, a German, who has been said by his countrymen to occupy in sculpture a position analogous to that of Overbeck and Steinle in painting, is a composition more conscientious and devout than vigorous or vital. Such religious art is not so much the abnegation of flesh and blood as the annihilation of genius; it has neither the promise of this world nor of that which is to come; in its lack of inspired conception as well as of dramatic impetuosity it would seem equally removed from God and devil.

In the Vienna Exhibition, German sculptors, though contending on their own territory, suffered defeat. Comparatively few works stood out conspicuously. The best were 'Hagar and Ishmael,' by Professor Wittig of Düsseldorf; a portrait statue of the great sculptor Rauch, by Professor Drake of Berlin; a bust of Professor Schnorr of Carolsfeld, by Herr Donnford of Dresden; and four portraits, with several sketches, fertile in fancy, by Herr Wagmüller of Munich. The fault of these and other contributions from Germany was that they proceeded from cold and calculating intellect rather than from warm emotion, creative imagination, or playful fancy. Within the whole space assigned to Germany I met with but two faces that were permitted to relax into a smile, so solemn and sepulchral are the figures which in dead marble are transmitted to posterity. And just as the heads are ponderous in thought, so are the draperies learned and heavy. The execution too is mechanical, smooth without delicacy, and hard without sharpness. Verily to Germans, however studious and philosophic, are denied that sense of beauty which seldom leaves an Italian without a charm, and that daring and dash which secures to every Frenchman at least some semblance of genius.

German sculptors vacillate between ancient classic and modern Italian styles. They commence with ordinary academic studies at home, and then go to Rome. Thus Rauch, Schwanthaler, Dannecker, Kiss, and many others, passed through the same study as the Danish Thorwaldsen, the French Pradier, and the English John Gibson. Hence it happens that for the whole of the present century the sculpture of modern Europe has fallen into an agreement absolutely monotonous. The sculptors of all nations have been working on the same models; they have been adapting themselves to that public taste which since the days of Canova and Thorwaldsen, and the writings of Lessing, Goethe, and Winckelmann, has been given over to Italianised classic styles. Even Frederick Schlegel, who as to painting espoused the purist and spiritual cause of Overbeck, admits that as to sculpture an exception must be made in favour of the Greeks. Also our countryman John Gibson was often heard in the Caffe Greco to propound the doctrine that the Greeks were always right. And though this dogma need not for the moment be disputed, yet, admitting that the Greeks are right, it still remains possible that their modern imitators are wrong. I am at all events sure that the one fatality of modern sculpture is its servility to the antique, and I rejoice to find in France, in England, and even in Italy, the dawn of an independent and intelligent study of Nature, the advent of a new idealism, grounded as that of the Greeks on natural selection and the perfecting of the highest individual model into a generic type. Germans are so much of metaphysicians, that we may reasonably look forward to the time when they shall become the leaders in this high and philosophic art.

The Italianised classicism of Germany is identified with great masters and signal works. Schwanthaler, the fellow-worker with Cornelius and Hess in Munich—he took the statues, they the pictures—was a man of amazing fertility of invention and facility of hand. His ardour grew contagious; like the great artists of old he was surrounded and aided by a host of disciples, and thus his influence is potent down to the present moment. When some years ago I visited Schwanthaler's studio, I was astounded at the artist's prodigal profusion; his creations, which are to be numbered scarcely by hundreds, but almost by thousands, comprised gods, saints, angels, and ordinary mortals. Indeed he was far too prolific to be profound, too rapid to be right. His ideas flowed fluently to a fault; he carved in marble as one who writes in water; his figures have a movement which is evanescent: they come as a transient thought, and melt away as a morning cloud; they may be a joy for the moment, but are certainly not a monument to endure for eternity. Schwanthaler's merits were ever on the point of degenerating into defects; his supreme sense of beauty passed into the love of prettiness; his grace fell into affectation—in short, conceit and sentimentality prevented him from standing as he might have done, the true and pure exponent of the spirit of romance. Indeed it is not a little gratifying to our national pride to think that Flaxman, Wyatt, and Gibson respectively and collectively [illegible] more fully than any other sculptors who can be named that ideal which is usually signified by the term romantic-classicism. To my mind, among the countless creations of Schwanthaler, the figure which by sensitive sense of beauty and proportion most fully realises the idea of the romantic, is the graceful 'Nymph at a Fountain' in the Hof Garten, Munich. Often at this season of the year have I stopped to ponder on this pensive personation of poetic thought, while the leaves of autumn were thickly falling and the trickling of the waters made music to the ear. Schwanthaler is a true poet, but perhaps it is his condemnation as a sculptor that he forgets the material in which he works: in other words he does not conform to the strict conditions of the sculptor's art.

Rauch at Berlin was the master of a severer school, yet he too could soften into modern romance, as when he modelled the 'Victories' for the Walhalla. The other day, when once again within this German Pantheon, it seemed to me that one or perhaps more of these stylish, but not showy, personations are, with Thorwaldsen's 'Mercury' and Gibson's 'Cupid,' to be ranked among the very few works which in modern times are all but faultless. Germany can boast of still other creations no less deservedly popular. There is, for example, in the Museum of Dresden a bas-relief of 'Protecting Angels,' by Rietschel, supreme in beauty and in range of imagination. And I need scarcely recall the recollection of the reader to a group so universally popular as Dannecker's 'Ariadne on the Panther' in Frankfort. This prime favourite with all English and American tourists is not free from obvious faults, yet how finely is the conception thrown into form, with what perspicuity and purity does the idea speak itself out; how strong is the appeal even to the cold and critical spectator! The silent marble seems to have music in it, repose is instinct with movement. I will only refer to Kiss's 'Amazon,' and to its companion the 'St. George,' a pair of bronze groups which now stand at the entrance to the New Museum, Berlin, as melancholy examples of the rant and the blatant show into which even the solidity of the Germans occasionally degenerates. Yet it may be admitted that there is something fine in the deadly conflict between the bold Amazon and the maddened tigress.

Germans are, I think, most at home in portraits: indeed in no nation have sculptors had more practice or finer heads to work on. We have already seen that the Ruhmeshalle in Munich contains eighty busts, and the Walhalla gives shelter to one hundred more: among the heads included in the latter are Albert Dürer, Peter Vischer, Van Eyck, Holbein, Guttenberg, Erasmus, Kant, Lessing, Herder, Winckelmann, and Mengs. The patronage within the present century thus given to portraiture is analogous to the wholesale orders for saints required for the pinnacles of Milan Cathedral: and it cannot be doubted that both in Italy and Germany the art of sculpture has been materially influenced by these great public works. Yet Schwanthaler and the school of Munich generally, being, as already seen, given to romance, fall into vague and nerveless generalities. Rauch, the leader of the school of Berlin, is, on the contrary, identified with a style more individual and concrete. Among the portrait statues of Europe I know of none that does more justice to a master intellect and a noble life than Rauch's 'Albert Dürer' in Nuremberg. And equally famous is the magnificent monument to the glory of Frederick the Great, which forms a fine historic ending to Unter den Linden in Berlin. Around a rectangular pedestal, which rises in three compartments, are ranged military chiefs, ministers, and men of intellectual mark. Some of these figures are on foot, others on horseback: all are closely studied in physiognomy and costume. On the sides of the pedestal rise bas-reliefs illustrative of the life of Frederick. The summit is crowned by a bronze equestrian statue of the king. It will easily be understood that the difficulties overcome have been all but insurmountable. And while standing before this, certainly one of the greatest of monuments in modern or ancient times, I have painfully felt a want of congruity in character and unity in style. Mr. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] The incongruous mingling of the poetic ideal with the most matter-of-fact reality; and the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. The

Here Clio, draped *à l'antique*, is presenting the little prince in coat and waistcoat, and Pallas Athene is presenting a sword to a young soldier in a cocked hat and gaiters." Mrs. Jameson justly adds, "All this is very questionable taste." Yet it would be unfair to single out the sculpture of Germany as culpable above all others: every artist must have realised the perplexities herein involved so painfully as to make for its shortcomings kind allowances. The public monument of magnitude and historic import, though at an immense distance in point of merit, is the Luther monument at Worms. Here Luther and his fellow-Reformers, supported by sympathetic princes, are herded together within an enclosure, as sheep within a pen. The imaginative sculptor Rietschel is responsible for the general idea and for the pose of the figures only. On the death of the designer the details unfortunately fell into the hands of inferiors. The execution exhibits the worst faults of German sculpture. Germans read character with intelligence and sympathy, and yet their renderings are less life-like than wooden. These sculptors are so profound that they seem to lock away thought in hat, boots, or vestments; they seldom let the idea play in light rapid motion across a feature, or pulsate along the sensitive fibres of a muscle. Germans are in all things proverbially heavy; it is only a Frenchman or an Italian that can make the surface of marble sportive in fancy or sensitive to emotions.

Germans claim for their sculptors in common with their painters and architects a decisive progress within the last few years. They urge that growth in political power, in private wealth with attendant luxury, has led to corresponding development in the arts. And by way of proof of this progress they adduce—not brilliantly as it seems to me—the alleged fact that the Kunstvereins are now able to show for sale in marble the works which in past times they exhibited only in plaster. And equally beyond the argument would appear the boast that these German wares are obtaining a wider and more remunerative market than heretofore in England and America, in Russia and the Netherlands. I confess that I see in such developments more of the power of manufacture and the push of commerce than access of talent. In place of this foreign market I can but hope that the time is not distant when, from the influx of gold [illegible] more directly national agencies, the genius of Germany may find its just reward within the confines of the Fatherland. German sculpture must, in fact, become truly German; it must cast aside what is hybrid and foreign; it must reconcile what is universal with what is local; it must mould an abstract ideal on the idiosyncrasy of national character. I have such faith in the German mind that I do not despair of even German sculpture.

J. Beavington Atkinson.

PORTRAIT OF LADY DUNCANNON.

G. J. DOWNMAN, A.R.A.

THIS drawing, done with so much spirit by Mr. Mitchell from Bartolozzi's print of the portrait of Lady Duncannon, executed for the theatre of Richmond House, was intended to accompany a study, after the manner of those to which readers of the PORTFOLIO have been accustomed for the last twenty months, on the painters of miniature portrait during the reign of George III. But the series of these studies, broken already more than once, either by the pressure of other occupations or by the [illegible] pausing of [illegible], must now be brought to a final close from the same causes. In closing the series thus, I cannot but express to editor and publisher my regret for the fragmentary condition, the ill reward of their consideration and forbearance, in which it is unavoidably left.

The miniature-painters of the class to which Downman belonged are much less remembered than they deserve. Even Cosway, the leader of the class, is perhaps less remembered for his genius than for the eccentricities and ostentation of his life. And [illegible] Cosway's [illegible] by a good many years, has never had his just reputation. The principal work of his industrious latter years, after he became an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1796, lay indeed in the field of romance and history, and was not of a kind to justify very high reputation. But for a number of years before this Downman had been doing exquisite work in the fashionable province of miniature—faces caressingly stippled in carnation to the daintiest point of finish, and the draperies of bust and head sketched in, with pencil and wash, after a manner which for all its slightness showed the utmost firmness of hand and the most incisive picturesqueness of observation. The frank and lovely womankind of that age had no more brilliant or more faithful flatterer. The reader may have seen a few examples of his handiwork on the screens in the North Gallery of the Bethnal Green Museum. The Duke of Sutherland is the possessor of a precious book of portrait drawings by him, bearing MS. notes, in many cases, of the date and circumstances of the sitting. And two more such books are the property, I believe, of Mr. Neville Grenville.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

SOME CAUSES OF ARTISTIC FAILURE.

IT is a commonplace that there are many artists with a really genuine talent who have not done what was expected of them, and now are never likely to do it; and of course much the pleasantest explanation of this is, that it is their own fault: that if they had worked harder, or if they had not isolated themselves, or at any rate if they had done or left undone something that was in their own power, they would have been famous and successful, or at any rate have come to the perfection of themselves. And as mortals are never faultless, there is little risk in the assertion that an artist, who from his first becoming conscious of his vocation should sedulously and unintermittently do his best, might really ensure this result. Such an assertion might be plausibly supported by the example of Wordsworth, whose gift was not one to attract the public at once, and did not manifest itself with any very peculiar splendour or charm at first; but he himself believed in it, and lived for it and worked for it, and so became a classic by force of industry and earnestness, and a kind of high reasonableness which was quite compatible with an entire absence of common sense, *i.e.* the capacity for being sensible with the sense of all his neighbours. But, after all, Wordsworth was less popular not only than Scott—who, in addition to industry equal to Wordsworth's own, had a sense of what would take, and was not too proud to cultivate it—but than Byron, who cannot be said to have understood his talent, who affected to undervalue it, and did nothing to improve it except exercise it. In general, though it may be true that perfect diligence will command success where there is real power to begin with, it is not true that success is attained in the ratio either of the original power or of the diligence, or of the two taken together. It is important to remember this and make allowance for it; because, when an effect is due to several causes, some of which only are removable, it will be easier to get the removable removed if those which are irremovable have been honestly recognised. In fact, if some artists, in order to make the best of their gift, have to work harder and more anxiously than others, it can hardly be superfluous to ascertain the causes by which they are handicapped in the race for success.

These causes are partly internal and partly external. For instance, if we ask why Haydon failed where West* succeeded, the cause was mainly internal. Haydon did not understand how to make a faulty organisation second his intentions. On the other hand, the reason why Blake failed where Stothard succeeded was mainly, though not wholly, external: either an elaborately complete artistic education or a sympathetic public would have saved him from wasting most of his pictorial power upon gloomy hieroglyphics, at once overlaboured and unfinished, and most of his literary power upon apocalyptic Ossianades. It is quite true that there was a great deal of mere perversity and wrongheadedness and obstinacy in Blake, but so there was in Beethoven, who yet achieved success completely, because he was born into a great artistic movement, with which he was upon the whole in harmony.

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* It may seem a paradox to talk of West's success, because his sentiment was a spurious continuation of Carlo Dolce, and his design a yet more spurious reproduction of Agostino Carracci; but such as his gift was, he was able to produce it completely and triumphantly to the immense gratification of himself and George III. The failure would have been if he had had to give up all his inflated impulses, and keep to the simple portraits, for which he did not care, though they are the only part of his work for which he is respected now.

There are several ways in which the defects of his organisation may hinder an artist, and there are several ways in which his circumstances may hinder him. As the former are the most important, and always enter into the others, it will be well to speak of them first.

In the first place, it may fairly be said that the artistic temperament is itself *pro tanto* a hindrance to steady work, and therefore in most cases to successful work. Every artistic elaboration begins and ends in reverie; the conception of the work of art presents itself as that which makes a series of confused musings articulate, and again its completion is to the spectator and also to the artist the starting-point of a series of musings which in their turn become indefinite. Obviously the artist is under a strong temptation to pass at once from the initial to the final reverie, and to omit the concrete embodiment, especially as the temperament of individual artists may often make those reveries most vivid which cannot be embodied in works that can be given to any public. Moreover, it is a rule, with very few exceptions, that the impulse both to conceive and to execute is apt to be intermittent, at any rate to be much stronger at some times than others, and this is a temptation to wait for those propitious moments which come oftenest to those who do not wait for them. Waiting, and even working at high pressure, when the moment comes, open the door to lassitude and dissipation and new lassitude. So that it may be said that in order to resist these temptations, and to be as industrious in practice as ordinary artisans and men of business, the artist needs to be, either by temperament or by conscience, more industrious than they are. If a man simply forces himself to be industrious, his work is certain to become mechanical, and it is doubtful whether a man can ever be sure of keeping his inspiration by being always on the watch for new stimuli, and always profiting at once by every stimulus that comes.

Again, artists differ not only in their capacity for application, but in their capacity for perseverance; one man may be absorbed in his work, so that he only asks himself, if he think about it all, whether he is doing it well; while another asks whether it is ideally worth doing, and is always being paralysed by his own anticipated contempt of the next touch or the next phrase, and so is at the mercy of outside distractions.

Then, supposing the artistic impulse to be equal, and to be equally manageable, it is obvious that though its positive strength may be the same, its relative strength, accompanied with other impulses, may vary very much: for instance, the æsthetic impulse monopolised Keats, and it was upon the whole subordinate to the craving for practical success in Scott. It is true that Scott's ambition to be a laird only stimulated his productivity; but the real literary power of the author of 'Vathek' remained comparatively barren, because he had many interests beside literature, and was in a position to gratify them; and Clough might have been a poet but for his conscious absorption in the spiritual and social problems which he found insoluble. One does not naturally think of Clough and Beckford as artistic failures, because the really splendid ostentation of Beckford and the moral earnestness and elevation of Clough seem to make their lives successes; but there are many artists in whom the conflict of incompatible impulses spoils more or less completely their lives as well as their art. To take only one instance of this conflict—the need to produce arises very often, perhaps generally, out of the need to enjoy. The artist at first produces for his own enjoyment, but afterwards, unless protected by a great simplicity and intensity of nature, he finds there are other and easier sources of enjoyment than production, and then the two needs come into conflict; as life becomes more elaborate this is an increasing cause of failure.

Then a great deal of the vital power which should have been artistic is wasted not only through indolence, or fastidiousness, or distraction, or double-mindedness, but also through irritability. Artistic success demands not only application and perseverance and devotion, it demands a rational, that is to say, an impersonal estimate of things, at least in so far as they are capable of artistic treatment. Now the artistic temperament of itself is sensitive, or it would not respond to the beauties which escape the many; and a sensitive temperament is naturally irritable, unless it be protected, as in Keats, by a great spirit of detachment, or as in Goethe by exceptional activity of intellect and exceptional robustness of character. Or, again, an artist may be so organised that the indulgence of one sensibility deadens others, and then too he will be able to look at his subject and see it as it is, without being called away by helpless anger either at personal ill-luck or at all the evil which is under the sun. An artist without any of these safeguards is liable either to be hindered in his work or to have his work vitiated, as much of the work of Dickens and Shelley was vitiated by the intrusion of non-artistic motive. This cause of failure also is likely to tell increasingly as social arrangements become complicated and stable, and all passion has to be suppressed; for suppressed passion is generally a source of weakness, though subdued passion is generally a source of strength.

There is another internal cause of failure lying deeper perhaps than any of these. Any strong individual impulse, if it sustains itself long enough, seems to tend to become an aberration at last. If one asks why Goethe and Turner only went wrong at the end of their career, while Wiertz went wrong almost at starting, and Wordsworth in what should have been his prime, one has to seek the answer not so much in the quality or direction of the original impulse as in its relation to outward circumstances, the artist's other gifts and dispositions, which perhaps are separable by a well-marked line from his strictly artistic capacity, though they determine how far his capacity shall be fruitful.

Lastly, it is to be remembered that these internal hindrances make themselves felt gradually, while the purely artistic capacity may manifest itself at once, and is the measure of what the artist expects of himself and of what is expected of him, though it is more than probable that these internal hindrances will mar his work, even if by conscientious resistance he keeps them from marring his character, because resistance absorbs forces that are needed for development.

But though the internal obstacles are sufficient of themselves to prevent equal endowments from attaining equal development, the external obstacles do much to reinforce them. There is no need to say much of the first of these—the want of opportunity of early training. It is obvious, that except to very exceptional talents, early training is the only guarantee of reasonableness and adaptability, and the contrary faults are readily recognised. The need of recognition and the need of sympathy are as certain as the need of training, but they are more readily overlooked, because it is possible to suppose that their absence may be compensated by the mere moral force of the artist.

In reality, however, we cannot but see that it is impossible for even the highest talent, sustained by the highest courage, to find a happy development in a time and place which do not supply it with appropriate aliment. Titian could not possibly have come to the perfection of himself if he had had to work in London, or Phidias if he had had to work in Amsterdam; no energy of the artist could have supplied the want of abundance of splendid form and colour in the world around. But an artist may suffer not only from want of appropriate aliment, but from want of an appropriate outlet; the relation between him and the world may be such that he finds materials for doing the work he is inclined to, but little or no demand for the work when it is done. It may seem that this at any rate ought not to affect the work, and yet it must do so, unless we suppose that an artist without assistance will be an infallible critic of his own work, or that his work already needs no criticism. Moreover, there are very few in whom the artistic impulse is so strong as not to need to be sustained and exalted by the contagious enthusiasm of others. Correggio was able to do his best without recognition, but Michael Angelo is said to have thought that Andrea del Sarto would have rivalled Raphael if he had been as famous, and it is certainly conceivable that such an external stimulus might have raised Andrea's accomplishment to inspiration. Though any individual case must be more or less uncertain, it is obvious that an unrecognised talent runs a great risk of being marred by eccentricity or wasted through discouragement. And a talent may miss recognition without any inherent unpopularity. To become known in time and to meet with stimulating fellowship are very important aids to artistic development, and they are both matters of pure luck, especially the former; for, after all, a companionable man is sure to have companions, and there are few companies out of which no stimulus is to be had.

Again, if an unrecognised talent escapes eccentricity and discouragement, it is still exposed to the danger of falsifying itself, of doing not what it is called to do, but what it finds is generally successful, or in more favourable cases of repeating an accidental success of its own, or of substituting technical for ideal success.

In addition to all this, internal hindrances may be fatal to an isolated unrecognised talent, which the same talent, if recognised and encouraged, might have overcome with ease.

Altogether, artists who fail have a strong claim to be judged indulgently by themselves and others; all the more because there is little reason to regret their failure. Men who are capable of supreme work never fail—either Fortune aids them or they conquer her. The world can spare all the artists who have failed: it could spare most who have succeeded.

G. A. SIMCOX.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER IX.

BY far the most charming sight in the early spring is however, to my taste, a larch-wood. There is such a delightful mystery in it, just when the leaves begin to sprout—a pervading green-grey bloom, from the grey of the branches and trunks, and the delicate green of the young leaves. Still more beautiful is it rather later, when the rosy catkins come into being, as Tennyson says,—

'When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March.'

About this time, too, the leaves of the horse-chestnut have pushed vigorously through their varnished scales, and are now visible all wrapped together in a great ogive bud, in softest cotton down. The quince-trees, always interesting in one way or another, are especially pretty at this time, for downy little pale leaves are coming all over the tree in little clusters, each cluster almost like a flower, the effect at a short distance being that of a scattering of light-green points, as if a swarm of small green butterflies had alighted on the tree. The ash and walnut, like the oak, show no change as yet at a distance, although the work of a new creation is elaborating itself within their closed buds; but the 'keys' of the ash catch the sunshine strongly, and are important and elegant from their vertical hanging—a quality which never fails to add a certain grace to trees whenever it occurs; as, for example, in the flowers of the acacia and many others not so beautiful or conspicuous. The elder, privet, and bird-cherry tree all advance simultaneously, and amongst the shrubs the wild gooseberry is in great haste to clothe itself with fresh green. This unpretending little shrub has been strangely unfortunate in being scientifically misnamed *ribes*—a name which the Arabs gave to an acid rhubarb, and a Frenchman by mistake applied to the wild gooseberry.*

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* I allude to the *Ribes Grossularia*, sometimes called *Ribes Uva-crispa*, the Gooseberry Ribes, not to the *Ribes Rubrum*, *Ribes petræum*, or *Ribes nigrum*, various species of currant Ribes.

But of all the plants that flourish at this season of the year not one is equal to the daffodil in its splendour of golden yellow on pale dusty basis of long green leaves. The causes of the singular and almost blinding intensity of the colour are a gradation from semi-transparent outward petals, which are positively greenish in themselves, and still more so by transparence owing to green leaves around, to the depth of yellow in the womb of the flowers, where green influences are excluded, but yellow ones multiplied by the number of the petals. So in the heart the colour is an intense orange cadmium, not dark, but most intense—a colour that we remember all the year round. Wordsworth found that this floral splendour haunted him,—

'I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.
For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.'

It is well for our northern yellow daffodils that they should be thus associated with one of the most beautiful passages in which any poet has ever revealed to us something of the working of his own memory and imagination. And then we have a very exquisite little poem by Herrick, in which he laments their too early disappearance; a regret which has been felt by many others who have loved the flower, yet never, it is probable, expressed with such exquisite conciseness,—

'Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon.
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained its noon:
Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song,
And having prayed together we
Will go with you along.'

But of all the associations which are attached to our golden narcissus, the most ennobling is its near relationship to the 'poet's narcissus' of the Mediterranean, which bears a solitary flower of pure white, with a yellow crown often edged with orange or crimson; and this is believed to be the flower to which the beautiful Greek legend has given the charm and interest which belong to imaginative tradition, and to that alone. The different stories of Narcissus agree in these particulars, that he contemplated the reflection of himself in the river Cephisus, or in a fountain, and afterwards became a flower, either because his blood was changed into one after suicide, or because a flower grew beside his grave after he died of sorrow for his twin sister, unheeding the charms of Echo. The stories differ as to his reason for gazing upon his own image; some say that he became enamoured of it fancying it to be a water-nymph, and others that he could not help looking at it because it reminded him of the sister that he had loved too much and lost. The popular impression seems to be that Narcissus was a beautiful youth who simply admired his own beauty, and gazed upon his form as it was reflected in the smooth water, afterwards becoming a flower on the river's brim, and continuing, as a flower, the habit of self-admiration which he had contracted in his human adolescence. This last interpretation, or simplification, of the old legends, whose details it drops altogether, is still very happily in accordance with the genuine old Greek spirit, the spirit of a time when no possessor of eminent physical beauty could remain unaware of a gift so much appreciated, but would see it reflected, not only in the waters of the Cephisus or other rivers, but in the admiring eyes of all Greek men and women whenever he appeared in public. In any shape it is peculiarly an artist's legend, having so direct a reference to beauty, so that it has often been illustrated by modern painters and sculptors. We do not feel very grateful to those later classical writers who have been at the pains to inform us that our *καλὰ νάρκισσος* (as Theocritus called it) has no especial association with beauty, and is not called so after the beautiful youth who was beloved by Echo, but takes its name simply from *νάρκη*, or, *ναρκάω*, with reference to its narcotic properties. Was the flower called *νάρκισσος* before the legend existed, and is the legend itself, as Keats imagined, simply the beautiful fancy of some early poet who, 'in some delicious ramble,' found the flower looking at itself in the water, and imagined for it the story that we know?

> 'And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
> A meek and forlorn flower, with nought of pride,
> Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
> To woo its own sad image into nearness:
> Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move;
> But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
> So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
> Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot,
> Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
> Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.'

It happened that the month of April opened with April's own characteristic weather. March had ended with a grey sky through which sunshine filtered, as it were, in a way much more trying to the strongest eyesight than the intensest glare of summer. All nature was a picture of the most various and delicate greys, with fresh greens sparingly scattered; a sort of colouring quite peculiar to the season and full of a quiet charm, when we are in a mood quiet enough to enjoy it. But the first of April brought with it a perfect revolution. Instead of the almost uniform grey sky, broken only by gleams of semi-transparence in the universal cloud-canopy, we had now separate clouds, having a magnificent individuality, and sunshine in perfect though temporary splendour. No weather is, to my feeling, so delightful as this genuine April weather. The play of light and shadow, so rapid in its transitions, so powerful in the suddenness of its unexpected yet most effective contrasts, would of itself be a subject of inexhaustible interest in any country where the landscape is not too irremediably dull for anything to make it lively; but this is not all. In genuine April weather you have not only the play of light and shadow, but that of mystery and definition, caused by the frequent showers, which pass before the hills at one time with the half-transparence of a veil, at another with the opacity of a curtain, so that it is hardly possible to find any considerable extent of hill-scenery of which one part will not be in the clearest definition that brilliant sunshine and a pure atmosphere can give to it, whilst another will be in purple shadow, and a third paled by a light-grey shower. It is a season, too, which will give to ordinary hill-scenery much of the life and glory of the true mountains. A forest-covered *colline*, which in summer is simply a rising land of rather sombre green, with a monotonous outline on a blue sky, becomes, under the lively effects of April, as rich in purple and blue, and silvery greys of distance, as a mountain-range in the north of Scotland. Nothing can exceed the vivacity and brilliance of these effects in April, and their brilliance is heightened to the utmost by the freshness of the unsullied greens in the foreground, which are made splendid by the glittering varnish of the rain. This is the time of the willow's pride and glory. He is as yet almost alone amongst the trees, and begins the concert of the year with a delicate and tender solo, to which we are all sure to listen; and he is sustained by an accompaniment of purple background, with such variations of sunshine that his singing, not naturally of the strongest, is made to seem quite powerful for the time. All the streams, too, are in a season of prosperity; for although they are rather swollen by frequent showers, they run plentifully but not foully as they did in winter, and all their little islets are like emeralds with the new grass that the clear water refreshes as it flows past them.

It is impossible to watch the effects of April without thinking of a painter who loved and understood them better than any other, and who painted them in all their freshness at a time when the connoisseurship of all Europe was in the brown stage of art-criticism, and liked nothing so much as thickly-varnished old canvases, so obscure that it was not always easy to distinguish what the artist had intended to represent. Constable said that he preferred spring to autumn, in which I find it difficult to agree with him; but as he loved the spring pre-eminently, he studied it earnestly, which landscape-painters who pass the season in great cities have few opportunities for doing. There is a description of an engraving from one of Constable's pictures of Spring, written by the artist himself, which is well worth quoting for its truth of observation about clouds. 'It may perhaps,' he says, 'give some idea of one of those bright and silvery days in the spring, when at noon large garish clouds, surcharged with hail or sleet, sweep with their broad shadows the fields, woods, and hills; and by their depths enhance the value of the vivid greens and yellows so peculiar to the season. The *natural history*, if the expression may be used, of the skies, which are so particularly marked in the hail-squalls at this time of the year, is this:—the clouds accumulate in very large masses, and from their loftiness seem to move but slowly; immediately upon these large clouds appear numerous opaque patches, which are only small clouds passing rapidly before them, and consisting of isolated portions detached probably from the larger cloud. These, floating much nearer the earth, may perhaps fall in with a stronger current of wind, which, as well as their comparative lightness, causes them to move with greater rapidity; hence they are called by wind-millers and sailors *messengers*, and always portend bad weather. They float midway in what may be termed the lanes of the clouds; and from being so situated are almost uniformly in shadow, receiving a reflected light only from the clear blue sky immediately above them. In passing over the bright parts of the large clouds they appear as dark; but in passing the shadowed parts they assume a grey, a pale, or a lurid hue.'

Notwithstanding Constable's passionate affection for the spring-time, and the advantage of possessing an eye that had been educated by the constant practice of art, it may be doubted whether he felt its influences more keenly than did a great early English poet, who had been influenced by no such general appreciation of the beautiful in nature as that which exists (or seems to exist) in modern society, and is so continually stimulated by modern writers and artists. It is truly amazing that a poet situated as Chaucer was situated, who had seen no landscape art but such as existed in the backgrounds of illuminated manuscripts or the sylvan scenery of hunting-pieces in mediæval tapestry, who had read no literature in which the landscape sentiment was more developed than it is in the Eclogues of Virgil, should have felt as Chaucer felt, and seen what he perceived. I do not mean that he wrote from the landscape-painter's point of view, for that has only been done by quite recent poets, and the attempt has in most instances been injurious to their compositions as literature, which is not painting, and ought not to imitate painting; but I mean, that to any one who thoroughly realises what Chaucer's situation was, it must be matter of astonishment that he loved nature with such intensity. There is a sort of quiet enjoyment of nature in the classical pastorals; Theocritus and Virgil evidently liked a country life, and they mention different kinds of trees and shrubs, and a few flowers, with a tranquil contentment that occasionally becomes almost affectionate, but they have nothing like Chaucer's passion. The note of the following extract from 'The Flower and the Leaf' may, it is true, seem delicate and tender rather than passionate, yet its tenderness is passion in repose:—

'When shoures sweet of raine descended soft,
Causing the grounde fele times and oft
Up for to give many an wholesome aire,
And every plaine was clothed faire

'With new grene, and maketh small floures
To springen here and there in field and mede,

So very good and wholesome be the shoures
That it renueth what was old and dede
In winter time; and out of every sede
Springeth the hearbe, so that every wight
Of this season waxeth glad and light.'

If from the 'small floures' of Chaucer we descend to particulars, and ask of what 'small floures' the verse at once reminds us, I think we can hardly fail to remember the common Draba, or *Draba verna*, which is both small and early, and as pretty in its elegant humility as many little plants that happen to be more popularly known. Tiny as it is, with stalks just strong enough to carry its little pods and flowers, and not burdened by any leaves, for they lie on the ground about its root, it still has an appreciable effect on the colour of an April foreground, which it powders with white like a hail-shower, and even at a distance it will make the green of a pasture greyer. The power of small plants in the colouring of landscape is often forced upon the attention of artists, and there are many remarkable examples of it in different parts of the world. The Draba does not strike the eye as it would if the flower were scarlet or bright blue, but it has its influence nevertheless as a moderator of crude greens.

A much more important spring flower in size and splendour is the Figwort Ranunculus, which, happily for its reputation, possessed a much prettier and more musical name; probably the great motive that induced Wordsworth to write about it. The rose might smell as sweetly by another name, and yet not occur so favourably to the euphony of verse. Wordsworth, in a footnote, called the Figwort Ranunculus 'common pilewort,' but he was extremely careful not to call it so in the stanzas of the poem itself. Hear how prettily the poetical name ends the first stanza :—

'Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.'

And again, the last stanza but one :—

'Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups that will be seen
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!'

It is curious what a hold this flower seems to have taken on Wordsworth's affections. He wrote three poems about it, two in the rather jingling measure of the stanzas just quoted, and a third, of far more serious tone and deeper meaning, in a measure adapted to the expression of earnest thought; and so closely does the noble sadness of these stanzas associate itself with the flower by which they were suggested, that it is impossible for any one who has read Wordsworth as poetry ought to be read, not to remember them when he sees the Lesser Celandine in her decay.

'But lately, one rough day this Flower I passed,
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"*It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold,*
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.
The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay."'

Surely in all the range of poetry there is no finer and truer description of the real nature of decay—that there is no courage in it, nor choice, but only necessity and helplessness—yet in the association with old age in man, which occupies the concluding stanza of this poem, one cheering consideration is omitted, that the note of melancholy might be wholly unrelieved. It is certain that by courage and strength of will men really can resist, for long years, some of the worst evils of old age, and at least one happy consequence of the modern feeling *de senectute* (so different from Cicero's) is that men not only try to keep themselves young, but actually succeed for a very long time in doing so. In the vegetable world there is neither courage, nor choice, nor effort, but only submission. The plant is rooted in its place, and can seek no shelter against the weather, nor any protection against its enemies, neither can it strengthen by voluntarily directed nervous force the resisting power of stalk or branch. We are so much accustomed to that old artifice of the poets, so suitable to the childish condition of the intellect, by which they attribute human feelings to the oak and reed, to rose and lily, that we have a difficulty in realising the true nature of a plant's existence. And yet there is poetry in the truth also, as my last quotation proves.

The Lesser Celandine attracts us by scattering a little bright gold on the earth so early in the season, but its yellow is neither more modest nor more beautiful than that of the later flowers that Wordsworth playfully sacrificed at the shrine of his early favourite. It is evident, however, that in addition to its sweetly-sounding name, the poet found another attraction in the Lesser Celandine—the idea of connecting his own fame with that of the flower permanently, and of conferring fame upon what had been hitherto unnoticed; an idea that has always been pleasing to poets, from Horace downwards. Wordsworth does not appear to have remembered that the name which pleased him by its music is associated with, and even derived from, the name of one of the most beautiful and poetical of the birds. Celandine is a corruption of the French *chélidoine*, which in Italian is *chelidonia* or *celidonia*, in Latin *chelidonium*, in Greek χελιδόνιον, from χελιδὼν, a swallow.[*] Opinions differ as to the reason why the Greeks associated the celandine with the swallow; some say that it is because the celandine[†] (not the lesser) comes when the swallows come, and stays as long as they remain with us; but others affirm that it is because the swallow used the plant (in which a caustic juice circulates like blood) to give sight to her little ones. Be this as it may, the plant takes her name from the bird.

P. G. HAMERTON.

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[*] The classical reader may remember the beautiful passage in the thirteenth idyll of Theocritus, where Hylas goes down to the fountain to fetch water for the heroes who are eating. Several plants are mentioned by name :—

Περὶ δὲ θρύα πολλὰ πεφύκει
Κυάνεόν τε χελιδόνιον, χλοερόν τ' ἀδιάντον,
Καὶ θάλλοντα σέλινα, καὶ εἰλιτενὴς ἄγρωστις.

Liddell and Scott suggest that *κυάνεόν* (which presents a little difficulty, as there is no positive blue about the plant) may have stood for *γλαυκόν* ; and this is the more probable that the under-side of the leaves might be accurately described by the latter adjective.

[†] The Figwort Ranunculus, which Wordsworth wrote about, has scarcely anything in common with the true Celandine but the colour and the name. The two plants do not even belong to the same family botanically. The figwort belongs to the *Ranunculaceæ*, and the true celandine to the *Papaveraceæ*.

EXAMPLES OF MODERN ETCHING.

XXIV.—LÉON GAUCHEREL.

In Venice.

M. GAUCHEREL has long been known as a draughtsman and engraver. Born in Paris in 1816, he became a pupil of M. Viollet-le-Duc, with whom, in the year 1836, he travelled in Italy and Sicily. Since the year 1844 he has contributed a great number of plates to the 'Annales Archéologiques,' and to the 'Gazette des Beaux Arts.' Besides contributions to various important publications, M. Gaucherel has published separately a series of 'Examples of Decoration.' He has exhibited regularly at the *Salons* and won a third-class medal in 1853, a second-class in 1855, with *'rappel'* in 1859, 1861, and 1863. He was decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honour in 1864. M. Gaucherel is not only an engraver, but also a skilful painter in water-colours, and one of his water-colour drawings—a view of Venice (the walls of the Arsenal)—was bought two years ago by the Government. For ten years he has been a member of the Jury, and twice President.

'My best works,' says M. Gaucherel, 'are my pupils.' Several of these are now accomplished artists well known to the public, such as Rajon, Le Rat, Courtry, Duclos, Lalauze. There is a certain sense in which the expression I have just quoted, notwithstanding its extreme modesty, may be true of any eminent artist who forms good pupils, however excellent may be the productions of his hand. It is a great service to produce good pictures or engravings, but the cause of art is served even more efficaciously in perpetuating to another generation sound principles and right practice. Of these two services the first stops with the thing done (except so far as it may serve afterwards for instruction and example), but the second perpetuates life itself, the living habit of working in the right way. There is no happier thing for the prosperity of art than this pride in forming good pupils, and it is a common feeling with French artists when they look back on the work that they have done. How much nobler is this feeling than the jealousy which refuses to communicate its discoveries to a junior, lest the path should be for him only a little less arduous! 'Let us teach the young men all we can, and spare them the waste of effort in useless seekings;' surely this is a better sentiment than the other: 'Why is the path to be made smoother for them than it was for us? Let them find their way in stumbling.'

With this plate closes our series of 'Examples.' Unfortunately we have not been able to fulfil in every respect the promises made at the beginning of the year, Herr Unger could not contribute on account of illness; and since the fifteenth of last July M. Jacquemart, whose next work was to have been for us, has not touched an etching-needle. He was seized with very dangerous fever at Vienna, and although his life was spared (happily for the fine arts), his recovery has been extremely slow, and is yet far from complete. M. Queyroy's plate was already etched, but when it was wanted the copper could not be found; he began another, and was interrupted by a severe domestic bereavement. If, however, we have been unable to fulfil our promises quite literally, we have endeavoured to do what might be as nearly as possible equivalent; and if we regret the absence of Unger and Jacquemart, we have a fine plate by Laguillermie, whilst (without desiring to institute any comparison between the two artists) this plate by M. Gaucherel may be an acceptable substitute for the lost copper of M. Queyroy.

P. G. Hamerton.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF GERMANY IN CONTEMPORARY ART.

III.

IT is well known how much the architectural aspects of the chief cities of Germany have changed within living memory; modernism has in its multifarious manifestations taken the place of mediævalism. The exception now is to find an old town in the garb of the middle ages. Nuremberg, with her narrow, winding, and shadowy streets; with her steep roofs, dormer windows, and gable ends, almost stands alone. Happy are, indeed, the towns which can manage to get on without restoration or enlargement. But the supposed exigencies of modern civilisation are essentially destructive; so great has been the increase of population and of commerce, so revolutionary have been the modern modes of military attack and defence, that there are comparatively few walled cities, few picturesque remains, that are not marred by modern intrusions. Ancient ramparts have been thrown down, to be converted into promenades or used for building ground; and sometimes, as in Vienna, round about the old central city—'cribbed, cabined, and confined'—have sprung up more than suburbs—churches, opera-houses, and museums. The most perplexing problem always is, how to join on a new piece to an old garment. New cities it is difficult to spoil; not even a modern architect can do much mischief in Berlin, Munich, Vienna, or Pesth; and yet it usually happens that in every city the point of supreme interest is some relic of the past not yet swept away. It is, however, vain to lament over ruthless destruction or incongruous renovation now too late to avert; the part of wisdom seems to be to make the best of things as they are. Such, indeed, is for the most part the spirit in which the architects who have changed the face of the old German cities have gone to work. The designs which I shall notice are usually commendable for utility and fitness; ornament according to fundamental law grows out of construction, and hence the empty show and the insensate extravagance which had long been the bane of architecture throughout Europe have given place to artistic simplicity and critical consistency. Matters are certainly improving, and it is interesting to find that the changes for the better in Germany are correspondent with well-known movements in England.

Germany having remained till only the other day disunited, she fortunately displays a corresponding diversity in architectural styles. The confraternity of the arts may indeed be compared to a confederacy of small states, each preserving its separate autonomy, held together loosely, yet maintaining amongst each other interchange of kindly offices. In no other nation subsist so many distinct art-centres, or so many institutions for the training of the artist ; and in no other land is art-activity more widely or evenly diffused. And thus the architectural developments in the divers parts of Germany are far from identical ; in fact, no two cities are alike. Berlin, Munich, and Vienna stand individually as the creations of separate brains. As in other countries the conflict has been between Classic, Renaissant, and Gothic styles, some localities have shown preference for classicism and its derivatives, while other places have given prominence to Gothic forms. Yet for the most part these conflicting styles manage to come to some agreement or compromise, and thus there are few capitals that cannot show Gothic as well as classic structures. It is evident, however, that of late years in Germany as in England the movement has been in favour of Gothic ; thus a style which at one time was held to be suited to churches only is gradually growing into secular use. Speaking generally, I should say that modern Teutonicism tends to eclecticism; and this system of elimination and assimilation has led to what at first sight might appear opposite results. Thus it will be seen in the sequel that in Vienna Gothic has been treated with singular unity, while in the same city have arisen buildings, Saracenic and Renaissant, which essay the boldest diversity. By means of a wide generalisation German architects seem to have discovered an underlying unity among all historic styles.

Berlin has long laboured under the misfortune of having been committed to stately classicism, yet it is pleaded that the dignity of which she has been in danger of dying yields at last to the demands of modern convenience and the allurements of growing luxury. The presiding genius of the spot is Schinkel, to whom the city is indebted for the Museum, the Theatre, the 'Bauakademie,' and sundry princely palaces. This famous architect, the idol of the Germans, was inflated with ambitious ideas; on paper he was strong, in stone weak: the Museum and other of his works are showy platitudes, common-place compilations. No man ever built more castles in the air. I remember to have seen in the Academy of Berlin portfolios crowded with the teeming creations of a brain which could have never rested—no, not in sleep even—for many of these phantoms of the brush dwell only in dreamland. It is a misfortune when an architect is also a painter; he is betrayed by facility of hand, he thinks out his subjects on the surface rather than in the solid, he sometimes sacrifices form to colour. Schinkel when in Italy indulged in landscape-painting, and on his return to Berlin he gave himself over to panoramas and scenes for the stage : he is even said to have turned out of hand the seven wonders of the world. Such mental dissipation naturally proved fatal to the severity demanded by architecture, the severest of the arts. That Schinkel paid the penalty of being Jack-of-all-trades, is proved as much by his pictorial as by his structural designs; the frescoes within the portico of the Museum executed from his drawings are discordant, diffuse, and trite. Germans, as a rule, are distinguished by the power of maturing; Schinkel, on the contrary, belonged to the order of minds whose pleasure is in the act of conceiving: such intellects are specially dangerous and delusive in architecture, inasmuch as for want of five minutes' extra thought a building which is to last for centuries may be spoilt. Happy were it for Berlin and other German cities could it be possible to put out of sight public buildings as easily as drawings are put away in a portfolio. I fear that Prussia continues to be committed to her old perversity. Some few years ago, when the Government called for designs for the Protestant Cathedral at Berlin, Gothic was forbidden, though certain of the competitors ventured on a compromise between Gothic and Classic, and others with good effect betook themselves to the Romanesque of old Rhine churches. Yet the National Gallery for Berlin, designed by the late Von Stüler, might almost be mistaken for the Madeleine in Paris. Two architects of Berlin contributed to the Vienna International Exhibition models of private houses, commendable as adaptations of classic styles to domestic uses. I know scarcely any city, save perhaps St. Petersburg, that has less to show in the way of originating thought than the stately stuck-up capital of Prussia. Italianised classic architecture has also found a favoured home in Dresden and in Stuttgard; it is said, however, that on the borders of the Rhine suddenly arose the love of Gothic and National styles—an exceptional fact not unnatural, considering the existence of the Cathedral of Cologne, the Cathedral at Neuss, and divers venerable churches in the Rhineland. Still German writers tell us that growth of wealth and political power in the Fatherland has inclined architects and peoples alike to the pomp, the ornate ornament, and the luxury of Renaissant styles. It may be well to remember by way of warning, that like motives conduced to the corruption and the overthrow of the arts in France.

It is rather late in the day to criticise Munich, and just in proportion as people are familiar with the originals in Italy do they show little mercy for the pretentious plagiarisms of Klenze and others. It has sometimes been said that the language of cities is expressed through shadow; if so, Munich must be almost speechless, inasmuch as her architecture is shadowless. The façades are flat, the crowning cornices want boldness of projection, and the consequent weakness and monotony of design become more than ever felt in the new Maximilian Strasse, ending with stately Government buildings on one side, the Bayerische National Museum on the other, crowned by the vast Maximilianeum. It is a common remark, that when a designer depends on surface decoration, polychrome, or pictorial compositions, he thinks all the less of masses, of bold projections, and other resources belonging to architecture proper. Certainly the street architecture in this new quarter of the city has a thinness and prettiness which are the reverse of architectonic; the structures rise as if built of cards; the arcadings and surface ornaments have little more emphasis than incised lines. Like objections are justly urged against the too pictorial designs of Giulio Romano in Mantua; in fact, it is the common fault of the Munich revivals that they might have proceeded from a painter rather than from an architect: the presence of fresco, or other play of polychrome, is doubtless prejudicial to that grand constructional art which primarily rests on form. The Maximilianeum, as the latest manifestation of the Munich school, merits a word. Its object is in part to furnish galleries for large oil-paintings illustrative of national history; also to afford suitable dwelling and training to young men for the diplomatic service, or otherwise destined for office in the State. The utilitarian end in view may not unnaturally have suggested the barrack-like aspect of the design. The façade consists of a raised centre, with two receding wings, flanked at either end by square towers; and yet, notwithstanding open arcading and a broken-sky outline, the effect is monotonous and weak. It is almost cruel to compare this great effort of the Munich architect Bürklein, with the noble and massive Palazzo Farnese, or with the garden-front of the Villa Medici in Rome. But a Michael Angelo will not come to Munich, even at the bidding of a Maximilian. The verdict seems to be that Bavarian architecture, though from the first ambitious and lavish of expense, remains to the last devoid of genius; at least if genius signify originating power.

Vienna has witnessed, within the last five or ten years, more striking architectural transformations than Munich. The clearance of the ramparts, and the devotion of the wide, open glacis around the old city to building purposes, have, in fact, brought about greater changes in the Austrian capital than in any other European city; and when the grand edifices already projected or in course of construction shall be completed, Vienna will be the equal of Paris. The Ringstrasse, two miles long, in parts seventy feet broad, and running round the circuit of the ancient ramparts and glacis, forms the line on which already stand the Opera House, the Kursaal, the Franz-Josef Kaserne, and the Votiv-Kirche. To these must be added one of the finest Arsenals in Europe, built beyond the Belvedere Gallery. Furthermore, on the circuit of the Ringstrasse will rise within the next few years the new Rathhaus, the University, and the Museum. The intervals between these and other public edifices are ultimately to be filled up by squares, terraces, and promenades. Thus I think Vienna will before long be unsurpassed, not only in pomp of state, but in quality of art. Even now, no city is so Imperial.

Vienna favourably strikes the traveller by happy varieties in style, which go far to make a city picturesque. First in time, though not in merit, come designs based on the inevitable Italian Renaissance. I need scarcely stop to mention ostentatious hotels, which almost, as a matter of course, glory in that insensate pomp which in all cities is supposed to offer irresistible attractions to English and American tourists. But there are at least two prominent structures—the new Opera and the Kursaal—which command respect. The Opera House is distinguished by an original treatment which makes new what otherwise were old; the roof, the walls, the windows, and especially the portico, with its magnificent vestibule within, fitly embody the free and sensuous spirit of the romantic drama. Surely after all that has been said as to the essential unity of universal art it remains true that there is one style—or rather, perhaps, one treatment and sentiment—suited to an opera-house, and another to a church. The Kursaal with its free-and-easy composition of Grecian porticos, round arched arcades, and dome-like turrets, shows, in like manner, a liberty and license which comport well with the song, the dance, and the tobacco-pipe. I seem to hear the echo of Strauss's waltzes in the piquant forms and the playful fantasies of this Viennese architecture. Here, too, are found, side-by-side with the southern styles of Italy, an Orientalism which gives colour and capriccio to the eastern provinces of the Austrian Empire. Specially worthy of remembrance is the new Arsenal: the grand central tower has for an entrance a horseshoe arch, above are round-top windows with geometric tracery within, and the whole effect is heightened by that pleasing play of polychrome which the Viennese know full well how to educe out of natural materials. This is yet another instance how Vienna, like Venice and Ravenna, catches form and colour from Byzantium and the land of the Saracens. Makart, the greatest painter in Austria, is in this sense Oriental. I find that architects have pushed their studies into Sicily; a suggestive fact that may account for the felicity with which the Norman-Saracenic style has been treated in Germany. The revivals in Munich and in Vienna have much in common, but Vienna has the advantage in versatility and vigour; she imparts, also, to worn-out schools unlooked-for novelty and originality. One advantage the capitals of Bavaria and of Austria possess in common—the command of ample space; but it strikes me that the architects of Vienna have turned their opportunities to better account: they have set their buildings on the ground so as to tell well individually and collectively, near to sight and in distant perspective. They are masters of composition in the detail and in the mass, and they manage to reconcile ostentation with moderation.

One of the best signs of the times in Germany, and especially in Vienna, is the revived use of brick in place of stucco. I first came upon this movement in the town of Hanover, where elaborate designs, borrowed from old German and Lombardic structures, are carried out in decorative bricks. And this development I have found stretching northward as far as Copenhagen, and southward down to the banks of the Danube. Still I know of no terra-cottas in central or northern Europe which compare with the rose-window at Monza, the façade of the Ospedale Maggiore in Milan, and the church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie in the same city. In Munich the Gothic church of Maria Hilf is of brick. In Berlin the 'Bauakademie,' from the design of Schinkel, is of the same material. In Vienna are the new Arsenal, the Franz-Josef Kaserne, and other structures, both public and private. I know of no buildings which more happily combine breadth, simplicity, fitness, and economy; moreover, the rich colour of the material brings a much-coveted relief to the monotony of street scenery. In the Vienna Exhibition one of the most memorable objects was a triumphal arch composed of terra-cottas. A company has been formed for working those extensive beds of clay near Vienna which were utilized by the Romans, and thus have been produced the terra-cottas for the great edifices recently raised. The establishment, the largest of its kind in the world, set up the triumphal arch in the grounds of the Exhibition in proof of its resources and its skill. The composition, which may be taken as a compendium of all that has been done or can be done in the way of burnt clay, comprises pilasters decorated with arabesques and medallions, and illumined with green and gold; it also includes painted plaques, with angels and emblematic figures in relief on a gold ground, and crowning the sky outline are terra-cotta life-size figures in the round. As for polychrome, which for long has been with all Germans a ruling passion, this trophy of ceramic art displays a wide range, reaching from creamy-white to yellow, and so through intermediate shades of red down to deeper shadow-colours and emphatic darks. It will thus be perceived that the Viennese architect is more than sufficiently furnished with structural and decorative materials, whereby he can carry out the most ornate designs honestly, without the intrusion of stucco or the aid of even stone.

Gothic, notwithstanding the prevailing proclivities in Vienna, Berlin, and Munich, to successive phases of Italian architecture, has of late years gained a footing. But it is to be observed that recent revivalists have not founded their designs on the models nearest to hand. The old Gothic churches of St. Sebalds and of St. Laurence in Nuremberg, and other structures, civil as well as ecclesiastic, throughout Germany, are distinguished by irregularity, ruggedness, and picturesqueness; but the modern revivals on the contrary are symmetric and all of a piece, the designs are worked out as logical conclusions from a germinating thought; given a single arch and its mouldings, the whole composition can be almost inferred *à priori.* Some such distinction between the past and the present is all but inevitable; the old work is the growth and agglomeration of centuries, and thus in the end it approaches a product of nature wherein accident and the elements break the uniformity of essential law. But new work, the outcome of some one individual mind, has no such plea for inconsistency. And I think modern German architects deserve much credit for having reasoned out the unities in the Gothic system of thought, for having eliminated anomalies and contradictions, for having got rid of impurities which, though always of interest in a historic development, cannot be excused in contemporary art or endured in a critical age. In Munich, a praiseworthy attempt—the Maria Hilf Kirche—has already been mentioned, and a Gothic Rathhaus is among the hopes of the future. In Vienna, what is accomplished and promised has greater import. Primarily may be mentioned 'the Votive Church,' the design of the Viennese architect Ritter von Ferstel, raised by the present Emperor to commemorate his deliverance from imminent danger. The parent church of St. Stephen has, according to the general law, moulded the features of this her latest and most lovely offspring; the famous spire of the Cathedral groups effectively in the city panorama with the light, graceful spires of this Gothic bijou. The Votive Church indeed stands well as a landmark, and takes the sky with a soaring outline; it is emphatically a thing of beauty: the effect is forced up decoratively to the uttermost by clerestory windows, by side-chapels which nestle among buttresses, by portals, pinnacles, and arcadings, and the whole has been brought into a symmetry and unity which stand, as I have said, in opposition to the ruggedness and picturesqueness of the older readings of Gothic. Of like logical consistency is the fine Gothic Rathhaus by Herr Schmidt, a design which, in the course of a few years, will add further embellishment to the ornate city of Vienna. A model, with ground-plans, in the Exhibition, shows a spire, the base of which serves as a central porch; this adds yet another lofty and elaborate spire to this city of spires. The wide-spread façade rests on arcading two arches deep, which cast strong shadow; above rise clustered windows with a top arcading of small windows—a most effective composition. The danger no doubt is, that in this latest phase of Gothic architecture, as in synchronous forms in the sister art of painting, the compilation may be so careful, the system so studiously scientific, that originality is positively annihilated. No doubt, Gothic of this pretty finesse has a peculiar fascination for the general public; like the style of the church of St. Ouen, it is especially the favourite of amateurs: but students who take profounder views prefer older and more robust types, such as give character to the west frontals of Rouen and of Wells Cathedrals.

I have already spoken in a former paper of the Orientalism which latterly has coloured and given passionate intensity to the art of painting among the peoples who on the eastern frontiers of the Austrian empire are springing into national life. A like awakening is found in architecture. Even in Vienna have, as already seen, arisen structures which take on Saracenic forms; and on sailing down the Danube as far as Pesth, an imposing Kursaal stands above the water, presenting a façade of round arches boldly shadowed, set with geometric tracery and supported by fluted columns with figures in relief. Further eastward, at Czernowitz, abutting on the Russian frontier, I find a project for 'the residence of a Grecian Oriental Bishop,' which shows marked signs of the Saracenic style. It is interesting to trace the distribution of cognate orders of architecture over wide geographic areas and through long periods of time. Thus, these designs for the episcopal residence at Czernowitz may claim consanguinity with arches and ornaments in the Cathedral of St. Demetrius in the ancient city of Vladimir, lying to the east of Moscow. Here the date is the twelfth century; the arches are stilted, the surface-decoration embodies animals, birds, and foliage; the style, distinguished as 'Russo-Byzantine,' approaches, I repeat, that Norman-Saracenic which, as we have seen, is springing into life within the Austrian Empire. The Jews, not unnaturally prone to Orientalism, have within the last few years started up in divers towns of Germany synagogues almost Asiatic in design.

In conclusion I would point to the systematic completeness and thoroughness of these German revivals. Architecture, as in the olden times, has become the parent art, giving birth to, and yet in turn receiving nurture from, sculpture and painting. Hence the three master arts have marched onwards hand-in-hand; and even minor arts, such as the carving of stone and the casting of iron, have followed in faithful service: thus, even the scraper standing at the church door waits in attendance on the arts enshrined within. And once more to be observed is the expression given by architects, several of whom were painters also, to polychrome; colour grows into something more than bare concord, it becomes a melody, a sequence, almost a story, telling its own tale and awakening its appropriate emotion. So intricate is the musical evolution, so highly wrought the harmony, that crude white intrudes, not as a relief, but as a dissonance: hence, almost by necessity, the statues in the churches of Munich are coloured. It may possibly occur to the reader that the best part of these German revivals we have experienced in England, under what may be termed 'Ruskinite regeneration.' Still the movements in the two countries, though analogous and synchronous, are different. Germany has suffered from no wholesale overturnings, she is not committed to contradiction, neither is she passing through chaos; on the contrary, even to a fault, she is logical and consistent. Yet I confess that a touch of divine madness I should greet as the one thing still needful.

J. BEAVINGTON ATKINSON.

SKETCHES OF ETON.*

ALTHOUGH these etchings happen to be brought out by the publishers of the PORTFOLIO, and it is generally a good rule not to write reviews which might possibly be taken for advertisements, I have decided to pass over the objection in this instance, because these 'Sketches of Eton' belong to a class of work which has especial claims to notice in this periodical. At a time when etching is running more and more into the interpretation of pictures, and forming rather a new class of engravers (more artistic than their predecessors, but copyists as they were) than a school of original producers, it is necessary to remind people that etching may be just as much an original art as painting is, and that what distinguishes it chiefly from burin-work is its greater adaptability to the expression of original thought. We ought, therefore, to give an especial consideration to etchings in which the artist has expressed his own ideas, and not simply interpreted the ideas of another. By far the greater number of such etchings are spoiled by the want of sufficient technical ability, being either the work of amateurs or else of painters who have not given time enough to the art for the mastery of all its resources; but there are a few artists who can etch effectively without depending for their material on the work of another hand.

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* Sketches of Eton. Fourteen Etchings by R. S. Chattock. With Descriptions by W. Wightman Wood Barrister-at-Law. London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday.

Mr. Chattock took to etching some years ago, and worked for some time with a meagreness of style and tone which gave little promise of his present more accomplished manner. If the reader will refer to the PORTFOLIO for 1871, he will find in the May number, page 76, a good specimen of Mr. Chattock's earlier work—very truthful and honest work; but the critical spectator perceives, at the first glance, that the etcher has not yet begun to feel the power of the etching-point, that he is trying timidly and carefully, and rather with the seeking of the student than the decided volition of the accomplished artist. Since then, Mr. Chattock's advance has been one of the most decided I ever witnessed. His plate in our September number for this year seems the work of another mind, so much stronger is it both in line and tone; and several other important plates recently executed are not inferior to it in these qualities. These 'Sketches of Eton' are nearly all of them rich and mature in style, though the subjects are not always equally artistic. There is a strong temptation in dealing with material which has an interest outside of art to select a subject for that outside interest, or else to be too observant of local fidelities. Mr. Chattock has on one or two occasions yielded, perhaps knowingly, to this temptation, though, on the whole, this set of plates has much more the appearance of etchings done by an artist for his own pleasure than of illustrations of a locality made for topographic reasons. The plate of the *Chapel Steps* is unpleasantly blocked up, the spectator finds himself within a yard or two of a massive stone wall, and even the stairs themselves do not offer a way of escape, for the artist has perversely cut them short before we get to the chapel door. In subjects of this kind an open door is a great relief, often the only relief attainable; but mere masonry, even when cleverly rendered, as it is in this instance, cannot long be contemplated without a desire to get either through it or past it. In the plate of the *Upper Club* (a cricket-ground), it has been a matter of extreme difficulty to get anything like a composition. It is composed of three bands—a band of sky, a band of trees, and a band of pasture—still Mr. Chattock has managed the material so as to get something like an artistic arrangement; for amongst the trees there is visibly a central mass, and two groups of sheep, with a central space between them, make a sort of composition in the foreground. Large white clouds too, behind the trees, are of great use as answering masses. In the plate of *Boveney Lock*, Windsor Castle comes in delightfully, and is agreeably half-hidden by the trees close to the water; but I wish those ugly little pollard willows had been omitted, though, no doubt, they are almost essential as a souvenir of the place. It is difficult to make anything out of such a subject as *Maidenhead Bridge;* and I scarcely think Mr. Chattock has done all that might have been done to make it tolerable from the artistic point of view. The bridge is seen too near, and is all exactly of one shade, as are the trees behind; a cloud-shadow would have been very useful here, and Turner would certainly not have omitted a gradation of some kind, his long bridges being always prevented from being monotonous by delicate management of shade.

Here ends all I have to say in the way of unfavourable criticism. The remaining subjects are treated very skilfully. The *Sheep's Bridge* is presented just as it ought to be, in opposition to noble trees lightly handled yet massively shaded. In the *Chapel from the Clump*, the chapel makes one of the most exquisite distances imaginable, and the foreground is drawn with great truth and power, whilst the bit of sky is very delicate. The *College from the River* is full of light and life, anything but mechanical copyism of architecture; all the battlements and belfries are as interesting as a painter's fancy, and the rippling river answers to them with a just decipherable medley of reflections as it passes hurriedly by. In *The Brocas* Mr. Chattock has caught one of the poetical effects of river scenery, and compelled a railway embankment and iron bridge to do him good service as a band of dark between flat land and variegated sky, The clumps of trees in this etching are most useful to break the monotony of the railway, and give dark reflections in the water; besides which they are in themselves noble and interesting. I think, however, that of all these etchings the most decidedly admirable in all respects is that entitled the *Sixth-form Bench,* the trees are so free and fine, and drawn too with such a right economy of labour, the dark water is so liquid, and the line-markings everywhere so well put and sufficient.

EDITOR.

ROADS.

NO amateur will deny that he can find more pleasure in a single drawing, over which he can sit a whole quiet forenoon and so gradually study himself into humour with the artist, than he can ever extract from the dazzle and accumulation of incongruous impressions that sends him, weary and stupefied, out of some famous picture-gallery. But what is thus admitted with regard to art, is not extended to the (so-called) natural beauties: no amount of excess in sublime mountain outline or the graces of cultivated lowland can do anything, it is supposed, to weaken or degrade the palate. We are not at all sure, however, that moderation, and a regimen tolerably austere, even in scenery, are not healthful and strengthening to the taste; and that the best school for a lover of nature is not to be found in one of those countries where there is no stage effect—nothing salient or sudden; but a quiet spirit of orderly and harmonious beauty pervades all the details, so that we can patiently attend to each of the little touches that strike in us, all of them together, the subdued note of the landscape. It is in scenery such as this that we find ourselves in the right temper to seek out small sequestered lovelinesses. The constant recurrence of similar combinations of colour and outline gradually forces upon us a sense of how the harmony has been built up, and we become familiar with something of nature's mannerism. This is the true pleasure of your 'rural voluptuary,'—not to remain awe-stricken before a Mount Chimborazo; not to sit deafened over the big drum in the orchestra, but day by day to teach himself some new beauty—to experience some new vague and tranquil sensation that has before evaded him. It is not the people who 'have pined and hungered after nature many a year, in the great city pent,' as Coleridge said in the poem that made Charles Lamb so much ashamed of himself—it is not those who make the greatest progress in this intimacy with her, or who are most quick to see and have the greatest gusto to enjoy. In this, as in everything else, it is minute knowledge and long-continued loving industry that make the true dilettante. A man must have thought much over scenery before he begins fully to enjoy it. It is no youngling enthusiasm on hill-tops that can possess itself of the last essence of beauty. Probably most people's heads are growing bare before they can see all in a landscape that they have the capability of seeing; and, even then, it will be only for one little moment of consummation before the faculties are again on the decline, and they that look out of the windows begin to be darkened and restrained in sight. Thus the study of nature should be carried forward thoroughly and with system. Every gratification should be rolled long under the tongue, and we should be always eager to analyse and compare, in order that we may be able to give some plausible reason for our admirations. True, it is difficult to put even approximately into words the kind of feelings thus called into play. There is a dangerous vice inherent in any such intellectual refining upon vague sensation. The analysis of such satisfactions lends itself very readily to literary affectations; and we can all think of instances where it has shown itself apt to exercise a morbid influence, even upon an author's choice of language and the turn of his sentences. And yet there is much that makes the attempt attractive; for any expression, however imperfect, once given to a cherished feeling, seems a sort of legitimation of the pleasure we take in it. A common sentiment is one of those great goods that make life palatable and ever new. The knowledge that another has felt as we have felt, and seen things, even if they are little things, not much otherwise than we have seen them, will continue to the end to be one of life's choicest pleasures.

Let the reader, then, betake himself in the spirit we have recommended to some of the quieter kinds of English landscape. In those homely and placid agricultural districts, familiarity will bring into relief many things worthy of notice, and urge them pleasantly home to him by a sort of loving repetition; such as the wonderful life-giving speed of windmill sails above the stationary country; the occurrence and recurrence of the same church tower at the end of one long vista after another: and, conspicuous among these sources of quiet pleasure, the character and variety of the road itself, along which he takes his way. Not only near at hand, in the lithe contortions with which it adapts itself to the interchanges of level and slope, but far away also, when he sees a few hundred feet of it upheaved against a hill and shining in the afternoon sun, he will find it an object so changeful and enlivening, that he can always pleasurably busy his mind about it. He may leave the river-side or fall out of the way of villages, but the road he has always with him; and, in the true humour of observation, will find in that sufficient company. From its subtle windings and changes of level there arises a keen and continuous interest, that keeps the attention ever alert and cheerful. Every sensitive adjustment to the contour of the ground, every little dip and swerve, seems instinct with life and an exquisite sense of balance and beauty. The road rolls upon the easy slope of the country, like a long ship in the hollows of the sea. The very margins of waste ground, as they trench a little further on the beaten way or recede again to the shelter of the hedge, have something of the same free delicacy of line—of the same swing and wilfulness. You might think for a whole summer's day (and not have thought it any nearer an end by evening), what concourse and succession of circumstances has produced the least of these deflections; and it is, perhaps, just in this that we should look for the secret of their interest. A footpath across a meadow—in all its human waywardness and unaccountability, in all the *grata protervitas* of its varying direction—will always be more to us than a railroad, well engineered through a difficult country.* No reasoned sequence is thrust upon our attention: we seem to have slipped, for one lawless little moment, out of the iron rule of cause and effect; and so we revert at once to some of the pleasant old heresies of personification, always poetically orthodox, and attribute a sort of free will, an active and spontaneous life, to the white riband of road that lengthens out, and bends, and cunningly adapts itself to the inequalities of the land before our eyes. We remember, as we write, some miles of fine wide highway laid out with conscious æsthetic artifice through a broken and richly-cultivated tract of country. It is said that the engineer had Hogarth's line of beauty in his mind, as he laid them down. And the result is striking. One splendid satisfying sweep passes, with easy transition, into another, and there is nothing to trouble or dislocate the strong continuousness of the main line of the road. And yet there is something wanting. There is here no saving imperfection, none of those secondary curves and little trepidations of direction that carry, in natural roads, our curiosity actively along with them. One feels at once that this road has not grown, like a natural road, but has been laboriously made to pattern; and that, while a model may be academically correct in outline, it will always be inanimate and cold. The traveller is also aware of a congruity of mood between himself and the road he travels. We have all seen ways that have wandered into heavy sand near the sea coast, and trail wearily over the dunes like a trodden serpent: here we too must plod forward at a dull, laborious pace; and so a sympathy is preserved between our frame of mind and the expression of the relaxed, heavy curves of the roadway. Such a phenomenon, indeed, our reason might perhaps resolve with a little trouble. We might reflect that the present road had been developed out of a track spontaneously followed by generations of primitive wayfarers; and might see in its expression a testimony that those generations had been affected at the same ground, one after another, in the same manner as we are affected to-day. Or we might carry the reflection further, and remind ourselves that where the air is invigorating and the ground firm under the traveller's foot, his eye is quick to take advantage of small undulations, and he will turn carelessly aside from the direct way wherever there is anything beautiful to examine or some promise of a wider view; so that even a bush of wild roses may permanently bias and deform the straight path over the meadow; whereas, where the soil is heavy, one is preoccupied with the labour of mere progression and goes with a bowed head heavily and unobservantly forward. Reason, however, will not carry us the whole way; for the sentiment often recurs in situations where it is very hard to imagine any possible explanation; and indeed, if we drive briskly along a good well-made road in an open vehicle, we shall experience this sympathy almost at its fullest. We feel the sharp settle of the springs at some curiously twisted corner; after a steep ascent, the fresh air dances in our faces as we rattle precipitately down the other side, and we find it difficult to avoid attributing something headlong, a sort of sudden *abandon*, to the road itself.

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* Compare Blake, in the 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell:' 'Improvement makes straight roads: but the crooked roads, without improvement, are roads of Genius.'

The mere winding of the path is enough to enliven a long day's walk in even a commonplace or dreary country-side. Something that we have seen from miles back, upon an eminence, is so long hid from us, as we wander through folded valleys or among woods, that our expectation of seeing it again is sharpened into a violent appetite, and as we draw nearer we impatiently quicken our steps and turn every corner with a beating heart. It is through these prolongations of expectancy, this succession of one hope to another, that we live out long seasons of pleasure in a few hours' walk. It is in following these capricious sinuosities that we learn, only bit by bit and through one coquettish reticence after another, much as we learn the heart of a friend, the whole loveliness of the country. This disposition preserves always something new to be seen, and takes us, like a careful cicerone, to many different points of distant view before it allows us finally to approach the hoped-for destination.

In its connexion with the traffic and whole friendly intercourse of the country, there is something very pleasant in that succession of saunterers and brisk and business-like passers by, that peoples our ways and helps to build up what Walt Whitman calls 'the cheerful voice of the public road, the gay, fresh sentiment of the road.' But out of the great network of ways, that binds all life together from the hill farm to the city, there is something individual to most, and on the whole, nearly as much choice on the score of company as on the score of beauty or easy travel. On some, we are never long without the sound of wheels, and folk pass us by so thickly that we lose the sense of their number. But on others, about little-frequented districts, a meeting is an affair of moment; we have the sight far off of some one coming towards us, the growing definiteness of the person, and then the brief passage and salutation, and the road left empty in front of us for perhaps a great while to come. Such encounters have a wistful interest that can hardly be understood by the dweller in places more populous. We remember standing beside a countryman once, in the mouth of a quiet by-street in a city that was more than ordinarily crowded and bustling; he seemed stunned and bewildered by the continual passage of different faces; and after a long pause, during which he appeared to search for some suitable expression, he said timidly that there seemed to be *a great deal of meeting thereabouts.* The phrase is significant. It is the expression of town life in the language of the long, solitary, country highways. A meeting of one with one was what this man had been used to in the pastoral uplands from which he came; and the concourse of the streets was in his eyes only an extraordinary multiplication of such 'meetings.'

And now we come to that last and most subtle quality of all, to that sense of prospect, of outlook, that is brought so powerfully to our minds by a road. In real Nature as well as in old landscapes, beneath that impartial daylight in which a whole variegated plain is plunged and saturated, the line of the road leads the eye forth with a vague sense of desire up to the green limit of the horizon. Travel is brought home to us, and we visit in spirit every grove and hamlet that tempts us in the distance. *Sehnsucht*—the passion for what is ever beyond—is livingly expressed in that white riband of possible travel that severs the uneven country; not a ploughman following his plough up the shining furrow, not the blue smoke of any cottage in a hollow, but is brought to us with a sense of nearness and attainability by this wavering line of junction. There is a passionate paragraph in Werther that strikes the very key. 'When I came hither,' he writes, 'how the beautiful valley invited me on every side, as I gazed down into it from the hill-top! There the wood—ah, that I might mingle in its shadows! there the mountain-summits—ah, that I might look down from them over the broad country! the interlinked hills! the secret valleys! Oh to lose myself among their mysteries! I hurried into the midst, and came back without finding aught I hoped for. Alas! the distance is like the future. A vast whole lies in the twilight before our spirit; sight and feeling alike plunge and lose themselves in the prospect, and we yearn to surrender our whole being and let it be filled full with all the rapture of one single glorious sensation; and alas! when we hasten to the fruition, when *there* is changed to *here*, all is afterwards as it was before, and we stand in our indigent and cramped estate, and our soul thirsts after a still ebbing elixir.' It is to this wandering and uneasy spirit of anticipation that roads minister. Every little vista, every little glimpse that we have of what lies before us, gives the impatient imagination rein, so that it can outstrip the body and already plunge into the shadow of the woods, and overlook from the hill-top the plain beyond it, and wander in the windings of the valleys that are still far in front. The road is already there—we shall not be long behind. It is as if we were marching with the rear of a great army, and, from far before, heard the acclamation of the people as the vanguard entered some friendly and jubilant city. Would not every man, through all the long miles of march, feel as if he also were within the gates?

L. S. STONEVEN.

THE SYLVAN YEAR.

LEAVES FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF RAOUL DUBOIS.

CHAPTER X.

A MUCH more delicately-beautiful flower is the common primrose, but her praises have been sung so often that it is difficult in this century to say anything of her that can be either new or interesting. Still, if we can say nothing that is new, there is always a delightful novelty, not unpleasantly mingled with half-melancholy reminiscences of by-gone years, in the sensation of meeting with primroses for the first time in the spring, especially if they happen to be in great rich clusters, in some corner where we come upon them unexpectedly. There are several nooks in the Val Ste. Véronique which the primroses have elected for their homes, particularly one place between the rivulet and a great wild cherry-tree, where there must be two or three thousand of these flowers. *Prima veris*, first of the spring, *primevère*, and first not only in the sense that is earliest, but first also in the perfection of its loveliness, if you think only of the delicate corolla, and not of the great coarse leaves, which seem as if they had been put there for nothing but to make us feel the exquisiteness of the pale corolla more completely. That corolla is the perfection of Nature's yellow, for it shows all the delicacy the colour is capable of; and if you seek that colouring elsewhere, you need not look for it on the earth, but may haply find it once in a twelvemonth in the purity of the clear heaven after sunset. The bees are glad when the primroses bloom in the grassy hollows, and they come to them from far, well knowing that there is honey down in the tube of the one soft beautiful petal. And whilst the primroses live in great companies in the shady places that suit them best, the cowslip and oxlip, their very near relations, live out in the meadows and pastures, over which also the bees range at this time very busily.

The influence of agriculture upon landscape is one of those questions which force themselves irresistibly upon our attention when we think about art and nature. There are two quite opposite schools amongst artists and poets in reference to this rather difficult and complicated subject. Constable was entirely on the side of agriculture, and plainly said that he liked the fields the farmers worked in, and the work they did in them; in short, the nature that Constable loved best was nature modified by man, and so he painted a well-cultivated country with villages and mills, and village-steeples seen over the hedges and between the permitted trees. This feeling about nature is a very common one in France, where people will often tell you that such a place 'is delightful for its scenery—you can count the steeples of eight villages, and you cannot drive two miles in any direction without passing either a village or a country-house.' The essence of this feeling is the dislike to solitude, and a sense of oppression when not relieved either by the companionship of man or by visible evidence of his presence. On the other hand there have been several modern landscape-painters, and a few writers, who believe in wild nature as an article of faith, being persuaded that nothing that occurs in 'unspoiled nature' can by any possibility be defective from the artistic point of view—a dogma of natural religion which is seductive by reason of its simplicity, and because it offers what man so much desires, an infallible authority and guide. But supposing that a thinker were to approach this subject armed with a good deal of artistic taste and experience, yet not in the least inclined to pin his faith to any absolute dogma on one side or the other, what would he be likely to decide? He would say most probably that both Nature and the farmers often made arrangements which might be good and reasonable on the solid earth that we inhabit, but which, for the clearest artistic reasons, would be perfectly intolerable in a picture; and such an opinion would be compatible with the profoundest reverence for the Divine arrangements, and a sincere respect for the useful work of agriculture. The material world was not made exclusively for the purpose of being painted; it has other uses, and there may be some incompatibility between those other uses and the exigencies of artistic colour or composition. Who would venture to paint a wheat-field at the beginning of April? Its intense crude green may be in itself agreeable as a refreshing change after the greys and browns of winter, but it harmonises with nothing else in the landscape, and the quantity of it is unmanageably great for a colour of such intensity. And if a wheat-field is too dangerous to be thought of, what shall we say to such a blinding phenomenon as a flowering field of rape? The difference between colour and colours could not be more vividly illustrated. In the artistic sense the rape is devoid of colour, though it is of the most glaring yellow, and a patch of it on a hillside flares over leagues of landscape. Not only ought artists to avoid painting crudities of this kind, but they ought even to avoid looking at them. It is enough to paralyse any delicate colour-faculty to live near a flowering rape-field, at least so long as the abomination lasts. The balance of colour in the entire landscape is destroyed by it, and the eye is rendered insensible to modulation. There are times when even wild plants may be a danger to the general harmony, but a belt of azure from the gentians on an Alp, or a large patch of rather crudely purple heather on the flank of a Scottish mountain, has always the great advantage of irregularity about its edges, which also lose themselves with more or less of gradation in the vegetation round about. The rape-field, on the other hand, is as obtrusive from the mathematical definition of its outline as from its insupportable intensity of hue.

The spring of the year, like the adolescence of the mind, is especially the time of crudities. May I venture to observe that even the blackthorn, which the poets have sung with affection, is at this time rather a crudity also, and not very much better, from the colourist's point of view, than snow on the hedges in winter? Of course, if you go close up to the flowers, and look at them as a lady does at her bouquet, you will perceive the yellow of anthers and green of calix, but these have little effect at a distance, and we feel the need of leaves. It is curious how far a flowering shrub can make us feel its importance, for good or evil, in the landscape. A single blackthorn can chill the edge of a forest, and this is the easier that the forest, being as yet leafless, has a wintry look in contradiction to the genial weather. A forest of oak is even *more* leafless now than in the month of January. The smaller oaks will retain the mass of their dead leaves, but the larger ones, being more exposed to the wind, will have lost the greater part of theirs, leaving a few only in the light sprays, which catch the sunshine as specks of ruddy gold.

Amongst the wild forest-trees in the Val Ste. Véronique one of the finest is the cherry-tree, which is believed to be indigenous here, and as the soil and climate are most favourable to it, grows to such a size that it may almost, in that respect, claim equality with the oak and the beech. At the end of the first week in April the wild cherry-trees are all in full bloom. At a distance of fifty yards the flowers so entirely eclipse the leaves that the latter are invisible, but the young leaves take their place beautifully when you are close at hand, not only for their form (the cherry-leaf is one of the most beautiful of all leaves for a good designer), but for their colour also, which is not crude, as young leafage generally is, but enriched with a reddish brown. There is one huge old cherry-tree just outside the wood, with plenty of space for growth, and a quite congenial situation. It is a great world of flowers, and the bees are constantly going and coming between it and their hives. Not only what are popularly called flowers may produce an effect, but even the less generally admired catkins may under certain circumstances acquire pictorial importance. One of the finest sights at the beginning of April is a tall aspen poplar in full morning sunshine, with its thousands of pendent catkins, which at a little distance take a rich dark crimson tint, and strikingly contrast with the light grey stem and branches. But the stem of the aspen is not to be compared with that of the silvery birch, which is one of the masterpieces of Nature. Everything has been done to heighten its unrivalled brilliance. The horizontal peeling of the bark, making dark rings at irregular distances, the brown spots, the dark colour of the small twigs, the rough texture near the ground, and the exquisite silky smoothness of the tight white bands above, offer exactly that variety of contrast which makes us feel a rare quality like that smooth whiteness as strongly as we are capable of feeling it. And amongst the common effects to be seen in all northern countries, one of the most brilliant is the opposition of birch trunks in sunshine against the deep blue or purple of a mountain distance in shadow. At all seasons of the year the beauty of the birch is attractive, and peculiarly its own. The young beech may remind you of it occasionally under strong effects of light, and is also very graceful, but we have no tree that rivals the birch in its own qualities of colour and form, still less in that air and bearing which are so much more difficult to describe. In winter you see the full delicacy of the sprays that the lightest foliage hides, and in early spring this tree clothes itself, next after the willow, with tiny triangular leaves, inexpressibly light in the mass, so that from a distance they have the effect of a green mist rather than anything more material. When the tree is isolated sufficiently to come against the sky, you may see one of the prettiest sights in Nature, the pure deep azure of heaven with the silvery white and fresh green of the birch in opposition. And yet it is not a crude green, for there is a great deal of warm red in it, which gives one of those precious tertiaries that all true colourists value.

No young leaves are more interesting than those of the horse-chestnut, which every lover of nature who passes the spring in the country must have watched daily in April, if the tree happened to grow within a little distance of his residence. When they get fairly out of the cotton, in which they have been so snugly protected against the severities of the early season, they first hang straight down in the most languid manner, and it is only after many days that they begin to spread themselves in the air like the fingers of an extended hand. No leaf but that of the beech looks *newer* than the young horse-chestnut. There is a great difference amongst trees in this respect, for some young leaves have a very old look indeed, and might be taken by a half-observant person for remnants of the later year; but when the horse-chestnut leaf is young, it has that air of newness which is seen in human work that has just left the hands of the workman. The impression is much increased by the quantities of leaves from the preceding year, which will generally be found on the earth beneath, for the horse-chestnut leaf is very durable, and retains its shape and substance long after it is dead and sapless. Painters are not generally very partial to this tree, because the size of the leaf and the definition of its forms require more accurate drawing than can be easily made compatible with the mystery that landscape-painters desire; but from the opening of the leaf-bud to the ripening of the fruit the end of a horse-chestnut twig presents a constant succession of interesting models for a designer of ornaments. Even such a detail as the position of the old scales, which remain after the accomplishment of their especial protective function, is of importance from the ornamental point of view, as one soon discovers after carefully drawing the extremity of a twig in full detail, when the leaflets are still hanging together vertically, or just gaining strength enough to begin to spread themselves, and the scales decorate the point from which all this new vegetation has issued, making the separation between the old woody twig and the fresh green leaf-stalks of the present year.

How long the colouring of foregrounds is affected by the remains of the previous season! and what astonishing contrasts are produced by this juxtaposition of death and birth! All along the sides of the April woods you may see the red of the dry oak foliage close to the fresh green of the willow and the white of the blackthorn, three colours as distinct as possible; whilst in the nearest foregrounds the last year's leaves of the bramble are still visibly an element in the landscape, with their stains of red and passages of russet and dark green. Sometimes you may get a few such leaves between you and the morning sunshine, and then, if the colouring of them happen to be favourable, you will see that which in all wild nature comes nearest to the effect of a painted window. The middle of the leaflet will probably still retain some of the original green colouring matter (being nearest to the midrib from which the sap was supplied), and its edges will be quite brown and dead; but between these there will be gradations from light crimson to deep purple, precisely of that quality which Jean Cousin and his school successfully tried for in their glass-painting—that is, colour intensified to the utmost by light unequally transmitted. The same principle is well known also to oil-painters, and can be (by means of glazing) to a great extent acted upon in their art, though not so strikingly as in glass-painting. When this principle is absolutely neglected or ignored, as it is in vulgar stained glass, in which a flat pane of blue is put by the side of other flat little panes of yellow or red, the colour is never really luminous, nor can it be.*

Besides the jewels of transparence, last year has bequeathed to us much deathly opacity, which lingers only too long in the spring landscape. There are great quantities of dead light-brown rushes, which for my part I am weary of, and should like to see hidden away under fresher and greener growths. It is consoling that so many plants come vigorously forward at this season. The enormous roots of the bryony, hidden away in so many places where no one suspects their existence, begin to prove their vigour by sending forth a few green leaves, which give promise of graceful festoons. Nettles are growing in great abundance under the hedges, which they border with a fresh and beautiful green; and many wild places are adorned with the richer and better colouring of the ground ivy, which the peasants in France, I know not wherefore, have chosen to dedicate to St. John. The great mullein sprouts handsomely in April, with his fine large cottony leaves, and it is a pleasure to meet with him again when we remember his summer grandeur. Contemporary with the great mullein, the barbed leaves of the arum, smooth and glistening, with their irregular spots of dark, grow quickly in their shady retreats. By the streams no April-flowering plant is prettier than the meadow bittercress, and

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* It does not follow, however, that to obtain luminous quality in colour each piece of glass should necessarily have a gradation *painted upon it.* Luminous quality may also be obtained by the graduated arrangement of small fragments, which, taken separately, had no gradation; in a word, by glass arranged on the principle of mosaic.

I know some places where it clusters in splendid constellations that bend over the water, and are reflected on it

> 'Like stars on the sea
> When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.'

The flowers being of the purest possible white, or else just delicately tinted with pinkish purple, show strongly in the evening when the first approaches of twilight have darkened the damp recesses behind them. You will find, too, in similar situations, the marsh marigold, often in the most splendid abundance, making a rich yellow foreground colour, and those more modest little plants, the creeping bugle and the small-flowered calamint, both which are good and agreeable in hue, and some places are known to me where the small purple flowers of the calamint are sufficiently powerful from their quantity to deserve the attention of a painter.

I suppose that no prudent artist would undertake to paint a field of broom in full flower, as we see them towards the end of April. The broom is certainly less objectionable than a field of flowering rape, for the yellow is more supportable and not so unmixed with green; besides, the green is much richer and darker than that of the rape plant, even if the latter were visible; but the broom yellow is too powerful to be acceptable in landscape-painting unless in very moderate quantity. It is conceivable that an artist might admit a broom amongst other plants in his foreground, but only with the greatest care and moderation as to the painting of its flowers; and in saying this I do not wish to maintain the authority of the brown masters, but that of sober and right judgment, which in art as in other matters must always predominate in the end. Whenever an artist admits any glaring and positive colour in quantity relatively great, he incurs the risk of not being able to harmonise it with the quieter hues of which the rest of his picture is composed; and I may add that Nature herself, from the artistic point of view, does not always succeed in doing so. I have met with people who consider any criticism of Nature as a sort of heresy, who, having adopted the theory that Nature is infallible, will not listen to any reasoning on the subject, and tell you that a field of cabbages is a finer sight than a gallery of masterpieces in painting; but if such persons could understand what art is they would abandon this fanaticism. All who have practised art are well aware that natural composition, though a suggestion of artistic composition, is never quite good of itself, and has always to be altered by the artist; and why should Nature be more artistic in her colour? I believe the truth to be, that artistic colour is as far removed from natural colour as artistic composition is from natural composition, and that it will be found on investigation impossible to produce what artists call fine colour by the simple copyism of Nature. It has been a vulgar error of the uneducated, whether practically painters or not, to imagine that things in nature were suitable for painting which in fact were altogether outside its province, to believe that they had only to paint whatever struck their fancy out-of-doors, and that *toute verité* was *bonne à dire.* There could not be a greater mistake. It is true that Art finds her materials in nature, but she chooses them as we choose mushrooms for the table, and if she were not careful in her selection it would be at her own great peril. And even when the material has been judiciously chosen it is only raw material still, but the finished work of art is material that has been both modified and reorganised by human taste, intelligence, and invention.

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London: Printed by JOHN STRANGEWAYS, Castle St. Leicester Sq.